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ATtribution THEORY
AND
MARriage GUIDANCE COUNSELLING

J.ROY

Ph.D

1988



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Attribution Theory and Marriage

Guidance Counselling

**A thesis submitted to the Open University in partial
fulfilment for a PhD in psychology by Jane Christine
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Abstract

This research is concerned with some aspects of the counselling process within Marriage Guidance Council Counselling sessions. The first area of investigation chosen was the interaction of the counsellors image of the ideal client with her perceived image of real clients. Unfortunately, it was not possible to pursue this investigation since not all of the counsellors images of who would benefit from counselling were sufficiently stable over time. This was felt to be due to the test used (the California Q set). The second chosen area of investigation was the client counsellor verbal interaction in first counselling sessions studied using transcripts of ten female and four male clients and two couples counselled by the researcher and one woman and one couple counselled by another counsellor. The content was analysed using attribution theory. Clients made attributions from a wider range of categories than experimental studies normally allow for, the most frequently used category was emotion and attitude attributions, this is a neglected category which needs further study. The results did not support previous findings that people make significantly more situational than personality attributions about their own behaviour. Clients have response strategies they use to reply to the counsellor, some of these are blocking strategies since they result in the counsellor dropping the subject being discussed; others are positive responses since they lead to the client and counsellor engaging in a dialogue. All clients living with their partners who returned for a second session engaged in at least one extended dialogue with the counsellor about an attribution made by the counsellor. None of the clients who failed to return engaged in an extended dialogue with the counsellor.

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Finally, thanks to my husband and son, Alexander, for putting up with the disruptions caused by my working on this thesis, and to Susan Swain for typing the revised thesis.

Statement

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not previously been submitted for any other degree either at the Open University or any other institution.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the prime motives behind this piece of research was a feeling of frustration. I am a psychologist, but I am also a counselling practitioner working with the Marriage Guidance Council in Milton Keynes. There has been very little research into marriage guidance counselling in this country and counsellors are often rather suspicious of the researcher and doubtful of the benefits of research. This is partly a reflection of the nature of the organisation and its training process. The Marriage Guidance Council is a voluntary organisation with few full-time paid staff and most of its counsellors are part-time volunteers who also have full-time occupations. (The nature of the organisation and its training process and the differences between marital counselling and other forms of counselling and psychotherapy, will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter).

However, there is a gulf between practitioners and researchers in general in the field of counselling and psychotherapy. Practitioners on the whole do not conduct research into their work, or if they do they tend to content themselves with detailed descriptions of a small number of cases which they use to illustrate the validity of their theories. Many counsellors and psychotherapists in this country do not have a relevant academic background to enable them to conduct research. Many practitioners argue that they are too busy helping people to conduct any research. They are unlikely to read much about research findings, although they may be interested in reading other people's theories and case histories interpreted in the light of that theory.

They may then, if the theory appeals to them, incorporate it into their practice with little regard for the fact that new theories have seldom been adequately investigated and at that time have no more status than a plausible myth.

Many theoretical psychologists are content to conduct their research in a laboratory setting because it is more controllable. Some have attempted laboratory analogue studies of counselling but the nature of the research design has placed so many constraints on what is happening that it bears little resemblance to the actual counselling process. Others have attempted to see if they can find any evidence to validate aspects of a particular psychotherapeutic theory. The most common theory treated in this way is psychoanalytic theory. The findings sometimes seem to suggest that those who started off not believing in the theory fail to find any evidence to support it, whilst those that do believe feel they have found confirmatory evidence. Most theories used by psychotherapists are complex and can only be tested by isolating small segments of the theory, so whether the research evidence supports or rejects that aspect of the theory, it cannot say anything about the validity of the theory as a whole. This type of research seems to make no difference to practitioners who continue their work as if their theory was valid.

Some theoreticians and practitioners have attempted outcome studies; these are reviewed in chapter 3. On the whole practitioners are content to study outcomes retrospectively, using their own personal judgments of success and failure or the clients' satisfaction with the counselling or psychotherapy as expressed in the final session. Theoreticians on the whole want to conduct prospective studies using an adequate control group who do not receive any counselling or psychotherapy.

In practice it is very difficult, if not impossible, to find a control group with people of the same age, similar backgrounds and similar problems. This is particularly the case in marital counselling or family therapy where the unit is not one person but a complex inter-relationship between two or more people.

One aspect of my feeling of frustration was a conviction that psychotherapeutic theories would not disappear even if they were discredited in some way by academic psychologists. If practitioners feel the use of a particular theory helps their clients, they are unlikely to give it up because academics say it has not been adequately investigated. Most practitioners are sincere and honest people; what is it then that happens during therapy sessions which enables clients and therapists to feel that a client has improved in some way although the theory used to help the client gain insight may be no more than a plausible myth? Is it simply a matter of a therapist's warmth and empathy towards his or her clients as Carkhuff and Berenson 1977 suggest? However, much warmth and empathy a counsellor or therapist has it is in practice difficult to treat all clients equally. Some clients are easier to like than others, some clients seem to be more willing to work at sorting out their problems than others. This can be something to do with the client and there have been studies reviewed in chapter 3, of what it is about a client that makes it more likely that his or her problems will be resolved. The chapter also reviews the therapist variables which appear to contribute to successful outcomes. However, it is unlikely to be a simple 'either/or' situation; either he is a "bad client" or she is a "poor therapist". There must be a interactive effect. It must be conceivable that given two equally skilled counsellors or therapists, one might find a particular client easier to help than the other. The chapter therefore also reviews studies of the interaction of client and counsellor variables.

The other approach to studying what goes on between client and counsellor in a counselling session, is to analyse the content of actual counselling sessions. Both the verbal and non verbal content can be studied, depending on whether a tape recorder or a video camera is used to record the data. It is possible to investigate in minute detail every aspect of verbal and non verbal communication between therapist and client. If this is done the study inevitably becomes mainly descriptive and it is difficult to analyse many sessions because it is too time consuming. The results are therefore not easily generalisable to other clients or therapists. A more manageable and useful approach is to analyse the meaning of the sessions contents which necessarily means adopting some particular theoretical perspective on what is important about 'what is going on' in counselling sessions. To do so may entail some loss of potential information, but it is likely to be easier to generalise the results to other therapists and other clients.

Chapter 4 outlines possible theoretical perspectives for analysing marital counselling sessions and discusses their strengths and weaknesses for this purpose. Attribution theory was finally chosen as the theoretical perspective to use. There were several reasons for this choice. There is an extensive theoretical and research literature in attribution theory. Although the majority of the research has been in the form of controlled laboratory based experiments, there has also been research into the attributions made by the partners in a relationship about their relationship. This includes both couples who are in a stable and continuing relationship and couples who have parted, and are analysing what went wrong. Valing and Nisbett (1971) have also suggested that one of the causes of emotional disorders could be faulty attributions, and helping clients adjust their attributions might be a useful part of counselling or psychotherapy.

Attribution theory is described and discussed in more detail in chapter 5.

Attribution theory is based on the assumption that people want to make sense of situations that they are in, that they want to find explanations for their own and other peoples' behaviour. It assumes that in seeking these explanations people act rationally, assessing the evidence available to them and coming to a conclusion based on that evidence. The theory allows for the possibility that different people will explain the same situation differently. Each person has access to different information, since each person's past is unique and a person's interpretation of a present situation may involve inclusion of evidence from their past. Each person may also assess the same evidence differently placing emphasis on different aspects of the situation. The theory also predicts that an actor in a given situation will explain his behaviour differently to the way an observer would explain it, since they have access to different information.

In a first counselling session, whatever the theoretical perspective of the counsellor, the clients are explaining their marital problems to the counsellor and trying to make sense of what is happening in their marriage. Counsellors are aware that even when situations are superficially similar such as two different wives talking about why their husbands are having affairs, the explanations they each give will be different. This will be only partly due to differences in their present situations; each woman has different relevant past experiences and each woman will interpret the evidence available to her differently.

Since attribution theory has not been used before for the analysis of the contents of counselling sessions, and hypotheses tested in controlled laboratory experiments cannot necessarily be easily tested in a less controlled setting, the hypotheses tested in this research are deliberately fairly general.

The first hypothesis is therefore that clients will make attributions about the causes of their marital problems. Since the counsellor does not simply absorb (passively) what the client says, but will comment and help the client make sense of her situation, the second hypothesis is that counsellors will also make attributions about their clients' marital problems.

It is probable that the nature of the attributions made will differ from client to client, depending not only on the nature of the client's problem but also on the nature of the client. However, it is difficult to formulate precise hypotheses about the nature of these differences since they would have to be based largely on guess work. It was felt that it would be better to see by examination of the data, whether there were any systematic differences between clients attributions, which might lead to hypotheses which could be tested in subsequent research.

National research shows that about one third of marriage guidance council clients come to one counselling session and then do not return. Some of those clients may have obtained all the help that they needed in their one session, however it must be the case that some of those clients do not return because they are dissatisfied with the counselling that they received for some reason. It was therefore thought that it would be useful to find out if there were any differences in the attributional interactions between clients who only come once and those who return for more counselling sessions.

Two more hypotheses were investigated which were more closely tied to the attribution theory literature and experimental results. One finding from experimental studies which can be translated into a testable hypothesis in this research is that actors tend to use more situational attributions than personality attributions when explaining their own behaviour, but an observer will use more personality attributions to explain the actor's behaviour than situational only. If the client is considered to be the actor when considering her own behaviour and the observer when considering her partner's, this hypothesis can be restated as:-

The client will make more situational attributions than personality attributions about her own contribution to the marital problem and more personality than situational attributions about her partner's contribution to the problem. However, the experimental result is based on presenting subjects with simplified situations to analyse which only involve explanations in terms of situation and personality; in a more complex situation with less constraints the attributor may use a greater range of explanations, which may usefully be seen as falling in categories other than 'situational' and 'dispositional'. Also in laboratory experiments the situations used usually involve interactions between people who are relative strangers to each other; in theory at least the partners in a marriage know a lot more about each other than strangers do, and this may influence the type of explanations they give. Therefore, applying attribution theory to a complex situation such as clients' explanations for their marital problems may mean that some of the conclusions reached from laboratory experiments have to be modified.

Although the majority of experimental studies have concentrated on situational and dispositional attributions, the theoretical literature does suggest other categories such as attitude attributions or motivation attributions.

The final hypothesis was therefore that in order to sub classify the attributions made by clients about their marital problems more than the two categories of situations and dispositions would be needed.

The hypotheses tested are outlined in more detail in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 then discusses the methodological problems associated with analysis of the content of a counselling session. Since this research focuses on the verbal interaction between client and therapist, it was decided to tape record the counselling sessions and to assist the analysis the tapes were then transcribed. Chapter 8 also describes how the transcripts were analysed and the attributions identified. In total transcripts from 18 first counselling sessions were analysed. Sixteen were the researcher's clients, ten women, four men and two couples. Two transcripts were counselling sessions of another counsellor, one with a woman alone and the other with a couple.

Chapter 8 discusses the definition of possible subcategories of attributions and how to categorize the attributions identified in Chapter 7. The process chosen to subcategorize the attributions is then described and the person versus situation to attributions hypothesis is tested.

Chapter 9 then describes the analysis of the interaction of client and counsellor attributions. It also considers whether there are any lessons the practitioner can learn to improve practice from this research. The conclusions of the research are then summarised in the final chapter.

THE NATIONAL MARRIAGE GUIDANCE COUNCIL

ITS CLIENTS AND COUNSELLORS

This chapter outlines briefly the history, structure and organisation of the National Marriage Guidance Council (NMGC) - the national organisation supervising the marriage guidance counselling which forms the substance of this research - and the selection and training of its counsellors. As much of the research relevant to counselling has been carried out in the context of psychotherapy, it also discusses the differences and similarities between psychotherapy and counselling. Since other agencies besides NMGC help people with marital interaction problems, differences between NMGC and other agencies are also discussed.

History of the National Marriage Guidance Council

The NMGC started in February 1938 under the title of the Marriage Guidance Committee. The members were mainly clergymen, doctors, magistrates and probation officers; Dr. Herbert Grey was their chairman. Initially they held conferences and discussion groups to examine the issues of marital breakdown. They did not intend to provide a counselling service.

However, people began to contact the committee for specific help with their marital problems. These people were usually seen once or twice by committee members; long term counselling was not undertaken. The start of the war brought a temporary halt to the work but it was restarted in November 1942 when Dr. David Mace was appointed part-time secretary and offices were rented in London for interviewing clients. Councils were also being set up in

other major cities and volunteers were used as counsellors. Initially their training was very limited and there was no formed selection process for prospective counsellors. The number of sessions was usually short-typically one for each partner on their own and one for the couple. After the end of the war a 2 day residential selection procedure was set up to try to prevent unsuitable people becoming counsellors. The first formal training course for counsellors was held in London in 1946 and consisted of 48 lectures spread over 24 evenings. In 1947 the local councils were given complete autonomy to run their own affairs within the framework of an agreed pattern of work and an agreed set of principles and aims. As these principles and aims had to be accepted by all of the counsellors before they were accepted for training and survived for 21 years until 1968 it is worth quoting them in full.

Principles:

1. Successful marriage, the foundation of happy family life, is vital to the well being of society.
2. Marriage should be entered upon as a partnership for life, with reverence and a sense of responsibility.
3. Spiritual, emotional and physical harmony in marriage is only achieved by unselfish love and self discipline.
4. Children are the natural fulfilment of marriage and enrich the relationship between husband and wife, nevertheless scientific contraception when used according to conscience within marriage can contribute to the health and happiness of the whole family.
5. The right basis for personal and social life is that sexual intercourse should take place only within marriage.

Aims:

6. To enlist through a national system of selection and training the services of men and women qualified for the work of reconciliation and education in marriage and family life.
7. To help parents and others to give children an appreciation of family life, and to make available to young men and women before marriage such guidance as may promote right relationships in friendship, courtship, marriage and parenthood.
8. To assist those who are about to marry to understand the nature, responsibilities and rewards of the married state.
9. To offer counsel to those who encounter difficulties in the way of married happiness, if possible before those difficulties become serious.
10. To work towards a state of society in which the welfare of the family shall receive primary consideration and parenthood shall nowhere involve unreasonable social and economic disabilities.

The tone and content of most of the principles would be considered generally unacceptable in today's society, and if followed they must have meant that in those days counselling was quite prescriptive and perhaps more in the nature of giving advice about the correct way to behave. The final aim is rather like a campaign slogan. However, it is also the only acknowledgement that marriage is part of the structure of society and prone to structural inequalities as well as interpersonal disorders. In fact, although the NMGC does not think of itself as a pressure group, it does give evidence to working parties and commissions dealing with marriage and family issues on which it feels qualified to speak.

As time has progressed the NMGC has changed its attitudes away from the more prescriptive ones in these original

aims and objectives towards an emphasis on individual responsibility and decision making. It is now felt to be up to the individual to decide for his or herself whether premarital sex is appropriate or not for example. Legislative changes such as making divorce much cheaper and easier to obtain have also had an impact on attitudes within the council.

Until 1965 divorced people were not considered suitable to be counsellors and any counsellor whose marriage broke up was asked to stop counselling. In 1965 this issue was raised at the Annual General Meeting and a resolution was passed allowing local MGC's to decide for themselves if they wished to sponsor divorced people for training; the National organisation would no longer automatically reject them. It was also decided that existing counsellors should not automatically be asked to stop counselling if their marriage broke down. In 1968 the general principles of the NMGC were reviewed and replaced by 5 objectives, these still exist today.

Objectives:

The NMGC is concerned primarily with marriage and family relationships, and believes that the well-being of society is dependent on the stability of marriage. Its objectives are:-

1. To provide a confidential counselling service for people who have difficulties or anxieties in their marriages or in other personal relationships.
2. To provide an education service in personal relationships for young people, engaged and newly married couples and parents.
3. To equip men and women to do this work by means of a national system of selection, training, tutorial

support and supervision.

4. To publish and distribute literature on a wide variety of topics relating to marriage and family life.
5. To provide courses and conferences for teachers, ministers of religion, youth leaders and others, and to co-operate with workers in related fields.

The emphasis in this new set of objectives is much more on what the council will do and much less on what is morally right. The council no longer has a formally stated public attitude to premarital sex, or divorce or the need for marriages to include children. Counsellors have their own personal attitudes to these issues and other moral dilemmas which can occur during counselling, such as abortion, and baby or wife battering. They are not expected to impose their own moral judgments on their clients, and care is taken at the selection stage to reject candidates who would be likely to do this. Although the objectives of the organisation are printed in the literature that prospective counsellors read they are not really emphasised, and many counsellors are not particularly aware that they exist. There are possibly some counsellors who would be surprised to know that NMGC believes that the well-being of society is dependent on the stability of marriage.

Current Organisational Structure

Since 1972 the NMGC has had its headquarters at Herbert Grey College in Rugby, where the national administrative staff are based and the counsellor training courses are held. It is partly funded by a grant from the Home Office which it has received each year since 1948. The rest of

the money comes from fees from local MGC's, courses put on for other organisations at the college, sales of literature and donations. The national organisation is responsible for training standards and regularly updates the training; major changes having to be presented to and accepted by the Annual General Meeting of the council. (A recent major change has been made in the training process, but this will not be described here as it only applies to counsellors who start their basic training in 1985 so all of the counsellors mentioned in this thesis have been trained using the previous model). The national organisation also selects and trains tutors. Tutors are normally experienced counsellors within the organisation before they are accepted as tutors. Tutors run the residential training courses and the local case discussion groups and give individual tutorials to each counsellor. They are paid on a sessional basis. There are 6 regional offices with their own regional officers, whose function is ^{to} help set up local MGC's and provide them with support. Each region also has a tutor consultant who is in charge of the regional tutorial team.

Local Marriage Guidance Councils are fairly autonomous, they have their own locally elected management committees, and they are responsible for raising their own funds and finding their own premises. Some councils have generous local authorities who give money and premises but most councils need to raise funds from other sources as well including asking clients for a contribution towards the cost of their counselling. Some councils have paid staff and others rely on volunteers, some are very large and others are small. Local councils are responsible for

recruiting counsellors and usually have their own preliminary selection procedure. Final selection is the responsibility of the national organisation. Counsellors attend case discussion groups locally, large councils having more than one. (The size of a group is ideally between 6 and 12). If the council is too small for a viable case discussion group the counsellors have to go to a neighbouring council's group.

Milton Keynes Marriage Guidance Council

Milton Keynes MGC has its own premises provided rent free by the Development Corporation. These contain an office and one large and one small counselling room. The council has 3 part-time paid staff - a secretary, an appointments secretary and a development officer. Only a few councils have development officers. Her role is to liaise with other local voluntary and statutory organisations to ensure that the development of the council keeps pace with the development of the new city. One major difference between the Milton Keynes MGC and other local councils is that much of the counselling is not done on the council's own premises. Milton Keynes covers a large area, and the public transport system is poor, so the council have adopted a policy of taking the counselling to the people rather than expecting everyone to travel to one central place. Wherever possible local health centres are used; however, later evening counselling is usually not possible in health centres so other organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau also provide rooms for counselling. Milton Keynes MGC has had enough counsellors for the last nine years to have its own case discussion group but so far it has never recruited enough counsellors to start a second group. (The

number of counsellors has therefore been between 6 and 12 over this time period. The exact numbers fluctuate considerably from term to term as new counsellors join the group and others leave). Since counselling is a voluntary activity most counsellors who leave do so to take up paid employment. In Milton Keynes counsellors who are prepared to counsel for a minimum of 200 hours a year are paid £4 an hour for each hour they work over a minimum of 120 hours a year. The local policy about client donations is that clients are told it costs £7 an hour to provide the counsellor's services and they are asked to make a contribution towards the cost. They are also told that they will not be turned away if they cannot afford anything. The exact amount of contribution is negotiated between the individual client and his or her counsellor.

Counsellors their Selection and Training

In 1981/82 the average number of counsellors nationally was 1,625. Any adult can in theory become a marriage guidance counsellor. They are normally, however, between the ages of 25 and 55 when selected, and they are expected to retire at 65. Counsellors do not need any academic qualifications nor do they have to be married or living in a long term relationship with a member of the opposite sex. There are many more female counsellors than male, mostly because of the time commitments involved; people working full time find it difficult to give the numbers of hours expected. The counsellors are therefore predominantly women who are full time housewives, perhaps with young children, or women with part time jobs. Since counsellors are mainly women the pronoun "she" will be used

to describe a counsellor rather than "he".

Prospective counsellors are recruited by local MGC's who usually carry out some preliminary vetting. In Milton Keynes candidates are asked to read some literature on the commitment involved in counselling and the nature of the training. Each candidate is then interviewed by a counsellor or a member of the paid staff to make sure she understands the commitment involved. If she is still interested she is interviewed by a different counsellor to find out her motives for wanting to be a counsellor. The final stage is an interview with a panel of two committee members and another counsellor. If the committee decide to sponsor the candidate she then fills in a lengthy application form and attends a national all-day selection conference. The all-day session consists of group discussions with other candidates under the supervision of a tutor and two half hour interviews, one with an NMGC tutor, the other with an outside expert (usually a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist). In 1982 an average of 47% of those attending selection conferences were accepted for training. Once accepted counsellors sit in on a first and second counselling session of two different experienced counsellors. They are sent a reading list of books they are expected to read during training and they meet their local tutor. They usually attend their first case discussion group just before going on their first residential training course at Rugby. This first course lasts 48 hours; the emphasis is mainly on the counsellor gaining self insight rather than teaching techniques of counselling, and on gaining experience through role play. After this the counsellor is considered to be ready to start counselling. All counsellors, whether

in training or not, attend the local case discussion group once a fortnight in term time, each session lasting 1½ hours. Counsellors in training have two 1½ hour tutorials a term, and experienced counsellors who have finished their training have one. After the introductory course the counsellor will attend a 3 part course with the same group of people. The parts are each 48 hours long, once a term in Rugby; again the emphasis of the training is on the counsellors gaining self insight and acquiring experience through role play.

The final phase of the residential training is a 2 part course on marital interaction, the parts again being once a term and lasting 48 hours. (In the past counsellors could opt for a two part course on group work instead). Every counsellor, unless she chooses to specialise in group work, is expected to counsel for a minimum of 120 hours a year. She is expected to write notes on each session and send the notes to her tutor for discussion in her tutorials. Once a counsellor has finished basic training there are other training courses available, but she is not normally entitled to attend more residential training courses for a year. Further training courses available are an advanced counselling course, and counselling clients with sexual problems. Counsellors who finished basic training with the marital interaction course could also attend the group work course as further training and vice versa.

The Clients

Heisler and Whitehouse (1976) conducted a survey of NMGC clients who attended for their first appointment in April 1975. They found that 56% of first interviews were with wives coming alone, 25% with husbands alone and 19% with

both partners. For this reason and for simplicity from now on the client will be referred to as she in general statements. Most clients were self-referred or coming on the recommendation of a friend or relative (70%), only 23% had been referred by other agencies, such as solicitors, doctors, social workers etc. The social class distribution of the clients represented the social class distribution of the population as a whole. The mean number of sessions per client was 4.2, but 21% of the clients were still in counselling after the 3 month period allowed for collecting the data, so the true average would be higher than this. The age of clients ranged from under 20 to over 60. The largest single age group for men was 30 - 39, representing 36% of male clients; for women it was 20 - 29, representing 38% of female clients. When counsellors recorded "what they felt the problem to be" 55% were considered to be problems with personal traits, 31% sexual difficulties and 22% infidelity. These were the largest categories; the total is over 100% because in one third of the cases the counsellors felt there was more than one underlying problem.

The Counselling

It is difficult to make general statements about the counselling even at a factual level since practice varies considerably from one case to another and from counsellor to counsellor. All counsellors however are committed to seeing their clients for one hour per week, apart from necessary breaks for illness or holidays. Some counsellors like to make contracts with their clients for a fixed number of sessions, with a review of progress in the final session and a discussion of whether another contract should be made. Other counsellors never do that and always make their counselling open-ended.

Others make contracts with some clients and have open-ended commitments with the rest. The first interview statistics of Heisler and Whitehouse suggest that less than 20% of a counsellors work load involves seeing couples, but this is an under-estimate. Clients may come on their own for the first session but their partners might come at a later stage. Counsellors encourage clients to involve their partners and will sometimes (with the clients' consent) write to them to offer them an appointment.

If both partners are willing to come, the counsellor may see them separately or together depending on what the couple want and what she feels is in their best interests; she may mix individual and joint sessions over the course of the counselling. The proportion of her work a particular counsellor does with couples is likely to depend on the time of day she works. If she works in the evening or at weekends, it is likely that a higher proportion of her work will be with couples than if she works during the day. Many husbands with full-time jobs find it hard to have an hour off work every week for several weeks. The counselling is loosely Rogerian, i.e. the counsellor is expected to provide non directional warmth and empathy. The counsellor is not meant to tell the client what to do but only to help her gain insight into what is going on in the relationship in the hope that this insight will help her achieve the changes she desires, or come to terms with a situation she cannot alter. The counsellor is likely to be directive in the sense of making decisions based on her previous experience of what aspects of the clients life or her relationship the client needs to examine most closely. Counsellors do not consider their task to be saving all marriages; if the clients want to part she is expected to help them do so with the minimum of bitterness.

In the cases where one partner has left or intends to leave, the counsellor will help the remaining partner come to terms with the break-up of the marriage if such support appears to be needed.

If a counsellor is troubled by a case and needs help she can discuss it at the case discussion group and hear her colleagues' insight into her case and how she is handling it, or she can discuss it with her tutor. In practice counsellors also talk to each other informally about cases that are bothering them. In order to preserve confidentiality in discussions and case notes, clients' surnames are never mentioned.

The Researcher as Counsellor

At the time the counselling sessions for this study were recorded I had been counselling for approximately 4 years. I had therefore completed the basic training and in addition I had attended a two part course at Rugby entitled "Counselling Clients with Sexual Problems". I was also a member of the paid counselling scheme; so I had contracted to do a minimum of 200 hours of counselling a year in return for a payment of £4 per hour for every hour over 120 that I worked. My work load was five cases per week, all five hours of counselling being done on the same day between the hours of 9.30a.m. and 3.30p.m. Couples are therefore slightly under represented in my case load, since many men find it difficult to get time off work to attend regularly. The male clients I see are therefore not representative of the population as a whole. They tend to be either unemployed or working in the kind of jobs where they have a certain amount of personal control over the hours they work, such as students and academic staff from the university, social workers and salesmen.

The other group of men who are able to come to me are those whose working day starts and finishes early such as milkmen and postmen, and some shift workers. I do not adhere to a particular school of thought in my counselling. My approach is more eclectic, using whatever approach seems appropriate for a particular case. I am perhaps biased towards looking at the client's current situation and only delve into their pasts where it seems necessary or the clients show it is necessary by spontaneously talking about their childhoods. My approach to first counselling sessions is a fairly passive one. I prefer to listen to whatever the client has to say rather than direct her narrative, since I believe what she leaves out can be as significant as what she includes. As counselling proceeds I am only non-directive in the sense that I do not tell my client how to solve her problems; I am likely to make a judgment about what aspects of her problem or her upbringing a client needs to focus on and then make sure we stay with those areas. I may also make practical suggestions for actions she may not have considered, or know about; for example there is a refuge in Milton Keynes for battered wives, and in appropriate cases I will give the client the telephone number so that she knows there is somewhere to go if she decides to leave the marriage.

Although I attempt to adapt my counselling to suit each individual client, I am aware that some clients appear to receive more benefit from their counselling than others, and it is not always clear why this is so. I find this frustrating both as a counsellor and a psychologist.

This leads me to want to find a way of investigating the counselling process which might produce some answers. If some forms of client counsellor interaction seemed more beneficial to the client than others, perhaps it would be possible to modify my approach so that more of the interactions were beneficial. This knowledge could then be shared with my fellow counsellors to help them improve their counselling techniques.

Differences between Marriage Guidance Counselling, Family Therapy and Conciliation.

The difference between marriage guidance counselling and conciliation is fairly clear cut. There are several different agencies providing conciliation services mostly local based. The only national agency involved to any extent in conciliation is the probation service. Conciliation is for couples who are on the point of divorce or even already divorced. It is primarily intended for couples with children. The objective of conciliation is to provide a forum where couples can air their differences about maintenance, custody of children and access for the non custodial parent. It is hoped that couples will be able to settle their differences amicably, hence easing the passage of their divorce and hopefully reducing the emotional trauma for both adults and children. There are usually two conciliators per couple and their role is more like that of the advisors in ACAS who help to settle disputes between trade unions and employers, than marital counsellors. Marriage guidance counsellors hope to see couples at a much earlier stage in their marital conflicts where reconciliation is still a possibility. When the relationship has already broken down counsellors see their role as helping couples cope with the emotional traumas of separation rather than the practical problems.

Conciliation services will only see both partners, where as in the case of marital breakdown it is common for counsellors to see only one partner. It is possible for a counsellor to help a client resolve her emotional problems created by the break up of her marriage without seeing her partner, but little can be done to resolve practical problems without the active co-operation of both partners (or the intervention of the law).

The distinction between marital counselling and family therapy can be made to appear clear cut but in practice the difference is not so great. The biggest difference is that family therapists believe that in order to resolve a couple's problems, the wider family need to be involved. The family therapist will therefore involve parents and/or children in the therapy if possible.

Marriage guidance counsellors will almost never involve the wider family in the counselling process. Sometimes couples have to bring pre-school age children with them, but this is discouraged. When this happens the counsellor might comment on the interactions between child and parents, but she is more likely to ignore it and hope that the child will be good and not interrupt or create a disturbance.

There is also a great variation between schools of family therapy.

Usually more than one therapist is involved with each family.

There may be one or two therapists in the room with the family and there may also be observer therapists watching the session either through a one way mirror or on video. The observer

therapists may call the active therapists out of the room leaving the clients on their own, or interrupt the session with comments

of their own. Marriage guidance counsellors normally work alone and would not normally consider leaving the room during the counselling session or permitting anyone else to interrupt.

These differences seem great; however both marriage guidance counsellors and family therapists are primarily attempting to help clients resolve their emotional problems. The family therapist may also find that in practice he does not see more than one or two family members. It is however likely that the family therapist will more actively seek out and use in the therapy information about the wider family than a marriage guidance counsellor will.

Differences between Marriage Guidance Counselling and Psychotherapy.

There seem to be two major differences between marriage guidance counselling and psychotherapy. One is the focus of the work. In psychotherapy the focus of the work is the individual and her personal problems. In marital therapy the focus of the work is not the individual but her interaction with her spouse; this is meant to be the case even if only one partner comes for counselling. In practice this distinction is not at all clear cut; a person may see a psychotherapist because she feels the way she ^{is} damaging her relationship with other people. On the other hand, the marriage guidance counsellor may feel that a particular marital interaction is unhealthy largely as a result of personal problems within one partner. She may then concentrate during the counselling in helping that partner gain insight into herself. Also, when only one partner comes for counselling, the focus of the work is often the person rather than her interaction with her partner.

The other major difference is in theoretical orientation. Most psychotherapists belong to a particular theoretical school - they are psychoanalysts, Jungians, transactional analysts etc - and they interpret their clients' problems within the framework of that theoretical school.

The Rogerian counsellor is meant to reflect back what the client has said rather than offer interpretations. Although there is no great emphasis on theory in NMGC training, the theoretical orientation does tend to be psychoanalytic. Many counsellors become interested in theory and study one or more theoretical approaches for themselves. They may then interpret their clients' problems in terms of that theory and give their interpretation to the client. In general MG counsellors probably dip into several theories and use whichever one seems most appropriate to a particular case, so for example in one case the clients' problems may be interpreted psychoanalytically and with another they might be interpreted using transactional analysis. This can lead to the attitude that counselling is less "deep" than psychotherapy - that counsellors do not really probe very far into the unconscious motives of their clients, unlike a psychotherapist. The "deeper" the probe and the more the client's unconscious motives are brought into her consciousness the more beneficial the process is considered to be and the greater her control over her future behaviour. This attitude is misleading: "deep" probing and insight do not invariably help a client find a solution to her problems. Sexual difficulties are a good example of this. It is possible for a client to gain a great deal of insight into the unconscious motivations causing her inability to be penetrated (vaginismus) or his inability to get an erection, but psychotherapists have found that this does not necessarily solve the problem; the vaginismus and the impotence are still there. The behavioural approach originated by Masters and Johnson, on the other hand, does lead to a high percentage of success when dealing with these problems, and does not require any insight into the cause of the problems.

Behaviour therapy is also very effective in terms of measured outcomes for certain marital interaction problems, and again does not require the client to have any insight into the causes of the problem.

Truax and Carcuff. (1967) suggest that an important variable in the success of psychotherapy and counselling is the warmth and empathy of the therapist. This is a major criterion for selection of MG counsellors; people who do not come over to the selectors as warm and empathetic would not be selected.

An MG counsellors work is also very carefully monitored, and counsellors can be asked to stop counselling if their tutors feel their work is not of an adequate standard. This is more likely to happen to a counsellor in training, but even fully qualified experienced counsellors are sometimes asked to stop. Counsellors are also encouraged to take breaks if they are having to cope with a crisis in their own personal life, which could interfere with their ability to counsel well. Good quality MG counselling is therefore probably as effective as good quality psychotherapy and poor quality counselling is unlikely to be any worse than poor quality psychotherapy.

A difference between private psychotherapy and MG counselling, from the client's point of view, is choice; the client can approach any individual therapist she chooses, and sophisticated clients may choose a therapist of a particular theoretical orientation. When a client approaches her local MGC for an appointment, her name is put on a waiting list and she is allocated whichever counsellor happens to have a counselling space at an appropriate time, so she has no choice in who she sees. Occasionally a client will specify she wants a male or female counsellor, but this is very

rare; normally clients do not state a preference and they are not asked if they have one.

Since in practice the distinction between counselling and therapy seems rather blurred, the terms will be used inter-changeably in this thesis. When describing other people's research, however, the term that they themselves use will always be used.

Research and the NMGC

There has been little research into marital counselling in this country; most of the published research is American. The report Marriage Matters (1979) acknowledges this and suggests that there is a need for more practice-linked research and for close collaboration between practitioners and researchers. There are several reasons why there has been relatively little research into marital counselling in this country. One reason is probably differences in training. In America most counsellors have a degree or post-graduate qualification in counselling, so that their training is more academic than in this country. This has two consequences. The counsellors in America are more likely to be aware of how to carry out research and more convinced about its potential value than English counsellors. They also have closer links with universities because of the academic nature of their training. In this country there are no university courses in marital counselling and no formal links between the marriage guidance council and any university; the same level of academic interest in marital counselling is therefore not likely. The marriage guidance council also has little money to spare from its budget to allocate to research.

Counsellors tend to feel protective towards their clients and feel that the privacy and confidentiality of counselling should not be breached. This means that they are mostly unwilling even to ask clients if they are prepared to co-operate in research while counselling is in progress, or before it has started; they fear that this will frighten the clients away. They may be prepared to ask at the end of counselling, but this limits the research to follow-up or retrospective studies. The counsellor is likely to be more persuasive with clients she has helped, and a proportion of cases end with the client not turning up or just ringing in to cancel. This means that it is likely that the clients who take part in research are the ones who have been relatively satisfied with the counselling.

Counsellors could do their own research but most of them do not have the relevant qualifications, and counselling is a part-time voluntary occupation; research can be time consuming and expensive. Hunt (1984) an MGC tutor and counsellor has conducted a study of clients' reactions to counselling after counselling has ended. This research is, however, to the best of my knowledge, the first study to investigate the counselling process within MG counselling sessions.

CHAPTER 3

COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

There has in fact been a great deal of research into counselling and psychotherapy - so much that it is not feasible to review it all thoroughly here. To structure the review, the literature has been divided into five broad categories: outcome studies, client variables, counsellor variables, interaction of client/counsellor variables and counselling process studies. Counselling process studies will be reviewed in the next chapter. This chapter will outline some of the more important studies of outcomes, client variables, counsellor variables and the interaction of client/counsellor variables and discuss some of the problems involved in conducting these studies. The categories are not mutually exclusive; for example, a study of client variables aimed at discovering what types of people benefit from counselling has to involve some kind of outcome measure. The focus of the study however would be the client variables rather than the outcome of the counselling.

There are many methodological problems associated with outcome studies. However a discussion of their strengths and weaknesses and what constitutes a "good" outcome is important because it is relevant to all other types of study. It is difficult to consider who makes a "good" therapist or a "good" client or what constitutes a "good" interaction in isolation from a consideration of what

is a successful outcome. The problems of defining success are greatest in marital counselling where there are two clients with their own possibly conflicting needs and expectations. This issue will therefore be discussed first before particular outcome studies are considered. The description and discussion of studies of counsellor variables, client variables and the interaction of client/counsellor variables will follow the description of outcome studies.

Outcome Studies : The Problems

The first and overriding problem is what is to constitute "success" in counselling - who should make the definition and whether there should be a universal definition applicable to all clients. Clients are likely to have different motives for visiting a therapist and different expectations of what the visits will achieve. It is difficult, then, to devise a universal set of criteria of success in counselling and apply it to all clients. The problem is even more difficult for marital counselling. not all clients are attempting to improve their marital relationship - some are trying to end it with the minimum of bitterness. A predetermined set of criteria of success would have to allow for both possibilities. It is difficult therefore to lay down universal criteria for success in any counselling and particularly difficult in marital counselling.

The counsellor can decide at the end of each course whether she feels its outcome has been successful, this enables different criteria of success to be used for each case. However this method of assessment is open to the charge that the therapist may over emphasise her own importance in the case and rate the outcome as more successful than it might have been rated by someone else.

In practice a therapist assessing success is likely to rely heavily on the client's self reported satisfaction with the counselling. If the client wants to be a "good" client it is not difficult for her to deceive her therapist. The counsellor normally only sees the client for an hour a week in a counselling room in isolation from the people and events that may be part of her problem. The therapist therefore only has the evidence of the client's change in behaviour in the counselling room and how the client describes the changes in her everyday life.

Clients can be asked directly for their own view on the success of their counselling, but this method also has problems. If the counsellor asks, the client may say what she thinks the counsellor wants to hear rather than how she actually feels. She may even do this if someone else asks for her outcome assessment; she may feel that criticism is disloyal to her counsellor or that the counsellor will get to know what she said.

In practice many outcome studies ask both client and counsellor to assess outcome independently of each other and only count cases as successful where they both rate the outcome satisfactorily. This method of assessment poses problems for marital therapy because it is possible for each partner to have conflicting goals; one person may want to end the relationship and the other to keep it going. If the relationship ends and the therapist has not been able to help the unwilling partner come to terms with that ending, then one person is likely to rate the therapy as successful because his or her goal has been achieved and the other as unsuccessful because his or her goals have not been achieved.

Timing can also be a critical factor in determining how successful a client feels counselling has been. Counselling involves the client in confronting some very painful feelings or situations. This process is not comfortable and the changes that confrontation brings about may at first be difficult to cope with. The client may rate the counselling unfavourably at the time but six months or a year later may feel differently. This may be particularly true of marital counselling, a couple who come into counselling feeling that they need to part and that they want the counsellor to help them achieve that goal may feel more unhappy at first when they have parted than they felt when they were together. Separation involves considerable economic and social changes for the partners and these can be distressing. However, waiting six months or a year to find out if the client has felt the counselling to be successful need not necessarily give a more reliable answer; the client may have experienced other problems in her life since the ending of counselling which cause her to be unhappy and to feel that the counselling can't have been any good otherwise she would not have had these new problems. It is therefore very difficult to define and measure success in marital therapy.

One way of overcoming the problems adopted by behavioural therapists, is to negotiate with clients specific behavioural goals for the treatment. This approach to marital problems is therefore only suitable for problems which can be readily defined and expressed in behavioural terms. The couple must also agree the goals together before treatment can start. This approach is therefore not suitable for couples who are in conflict about their goals.

In practice the therapy is restricted to those couples who want to stay together and who are able to negotiate with the therapist an agreed set of behavioural goals. These are then usually written down and form the basis of the contract between the therapist and the client. It is then relatively easy to measure the clients' progress towards these goals and in follow up studies to determine whether the desired behaviour has been maintained.

However the behaviour therapist will not take into therapy many couples that other marital therapists will attempt to help because their goals cannot be expressed behaviourally or their goals are incompatible. Jacobson and Martin (1976) in a review of outcome studies in behavioural marital counselling, state that they believe that the evidence for the effectiveness of behavioural strategies is "suggestive rather than experimentally demonstrated". One reason for their caution is that many of the studies they review are case studies only and do not involve the comparison of a treated group of clients and an untreated control group.

Ideally all studies of outcomes of counselling should contain an untreated control group; otherwise the research can never answer the question of whether all or a proportion of these people would have "improved" without the help of a therapist. In a therapy setting, however, there are several problems associated with providing a control group. The control group often consists of clients who have to wait longer for therapy than the experimental group. Ideally clients who ring for appointments should be randomly assigned to the control or the therapy group. However, therapists often feel uneasy about deliberately making people wait when they are in distress for the sake of a research design.

This means that in practice the clients who appear the most distressed are often put into the therapy group, so the two groups are not alike. Using clients on the waiting list as a control group can have another problem. Being on the waiting list may actually deter clients from attempting to solve their own problems: they may feel they should not attempt to make any changes in themselves or their situation until they have seen the expert, so there will be a low rate of spontaneous improvement compared with people with similar personal problems who do not want to see a therapist. It can be very difficult to find a control group of people who have similar problems and a similar degree of distress to the client group but who have not themselves requested therapy. This is particularly true of married couples; it would be necessary to ask a lot of personal questions that they may not wish to answer, about their relationship at a time when it was in difficulties. Even if a suitable group of people were found to act as a control group one of the differences between distressed people who seek therapy and those who do not may be that those who do not have greater faith in their own ability to solve problems and so they make more active attempts to resolve their difficulties than those people who seek therapy. Partly as a consequence of all these difficulties many outcome studies in marital therapy do not include a control group at all. Olson (1970) says that most studies are "generally methodologically and conceptually weak and rely on self-report rather than behavioural data". Eysenck has suggested that up to two thirds of people with personal problems recover spontaneously without psychotherapy. Beck (1975) however concludes that this does not apply to marital counselling, since studies involving a control group show that changes in the absence of treatment were consistently small and not normally statistically significant.

It seems to me that because of all the problems involved in adequately defining success and finding a control group of people with similar problems who receive no therapy, controlled outcome studies are of limited value. They may produce an estimate of the success rate of a particular type of counselling, but they say nothing about why some cases were successful and others were not. It is perhaps better to look at success more qualitatively and concentrate on why some cases have better outcomes than others. This information can then be used to help counsellors improve their techniques or select their clients more carefully.

Outcome Studies of Marital Counselling

Despite the problems, there are however things we can learn from the outcome studies which have been carried out. Brandreth and Pike (1967), in a study assessing the marital work of a family agency in Canada, argued that the research was valuable because it increased the staff's awareness of problem areas and suggested future developments. However, they felt the gains had to be balanced against the amount of time, planning and co-ordination needed to complete the project. They felt that in view of the demands for the agencies' services, on going research involving all of the agencies staff could not be justified. This problem is particularly acute for the NMGC since the majority of its counsellors are part time volunteers.

Two local MGC's have carried out studies of outcomes by sending postal questionnaires to former clients. Bournemouth MGC in 1977 sent a questionnaire to long term clients 6 months after the end of counselling; the response rate was 50%, and of these half were very satisfied with their counselling and made no adverse comments. The aspect of counselling most appreciated was "providing support

during a difficult time".

Leicester MGC in 1979 sent a questionnaire to all clients who completed counselling in 1979. Again the response rate was 50%. One question was the retrospective "when you came for your first appointment, what did you think counselling could do for you". The largest categories of response were "advice on my problem" and "clarify personal problems", with 14% of responses each. Half of the respondents felt that counselling had helped them.

Hunt (1984) has conducted a more extensive survey of MGC clients views of their counselling. She contacted all clients of one of the larger MGC's who finished counselling in two months of 1980. 43% of those contacted replied and eventually 51 clients from 42 marriages were interviewed by the researcher; she also interviewed the counsellors. Only 25% of the clients were dissatisfied with the counselling they had received; the rest were at least partially satisfied. (The counsellor's own assessments of outcome were more optimistic). She found that the couples who stayed together were more likely to feel positive about their counselling than those who had parted.

This may be due to the social problems associated with separation, or it may be a result of the client's expectations that an agency called marriage guidance would help them stay together. It is perhaps important that clients have realistic objectives that they hope to achieve from the counselling. Hunt found that in general clients who came feeling optimistic ended up feeling hopeless, whilst those who came feeling "they were at the end of their tether" ended up feeling better.

Of the couples remaining together, the majority who were now happier had had at least some joint sessions involving both partners. In the cases where the couple were still together but they were not very happy, only the minority had had joint sessions. This seems to suggest that, if the goal of the counselling is to improve the quality of the relationship, the counsellor should try to ensure that both partners come for counselling. However, it may be the case that the marriages that became happier did so because both partners wanted the marriage to improve. In the cases where marital satisfaction did not improve, perhaps one partner was not prepared to co-operate and it was this factor rather than his lack of attendance which led to the marriage remaining poor. Support for this notion is suggested by Bennun (1984) who rather than conducting either a retrospective or a prospective outcome study compared three different approaches to marital counselling. He assigned couples randomly to (a) couples treatment with a therapist or (b) group treatment with several couples meeting together with the therapist or (c) individual treatment where only one partner of the marriage would be seen in therapy. He found that there was no significant differences between the outcomes of the treatments. This suggests that it is perhaps some aspect of the therapeutic process that is important or some aspect of the client or therapist rather than the exact therapeutic strategy.

Outcome studies may not actually be able to provide an unambiguous answer to the question "Does this form of therapy work?" However they do help to clarify what clients are looking for when they enter therapy and whether they feel they have found it. This can help the therapists adjust their own goals and expectations so that they are better able to meet the client's needs, or help the client see that his or her expectations are unrealistic.

However the question that even a perfectly designed outcome study cannot answer is, what is it about the counselling process, the client or the counsellor that produced the successful outcome? Some researchers have attempted to find answers to this question. In order to do so they have to attempt to measure how successful the counselling has been. However, they are doing this only to try and find some general differences between successful and unsuccessful cases.

Counsellor or Therapist Variables

There are many counsellor variables which could potentially influence the counselling clients receive: counsellors' age, sex and racial or class origins, the counsellors' attitudes and personality and theoretical orientation. However, most of these variables are difficult to study in isolation from the nature of the clients. For example, not only may male and female counsellors counsel differently because of their gender differences, but clients may behave differently with a male counsellor compared to a female counsellor and any inherent differences in the counsellors will be exaggerated.

Swenson and Ragucci (1984) attempted to find out if therapists have different attitudes to what constitutes mental health in men and women. They found evidence for a double standard. Nearly two thirds of their subject sample rated a healthy man as androgynous, i.e. having both stereotypically masculine and feminine characteristics. However, their image of the mentally healthy female was clarified as undifferentiated, i.e. although she had similar numbers of masculine and feminine characteristics the score on both scales was low. Other research has suggested that this categorisation is associated with poor psychological adjustment. The authors conclude that either there are inadequacies in the questionnaire used (the Bem sex role inventory) or the therapist's ideas of female mental health are not very desirable.

Much of the research into counsellor variables has concentrated on what personal qualities in the counsellors seem to help them to be effective with clients. Carkhuff and Berenson (1977) feel the important dimensions are empathy, respect, genuineness and concreteness. They define empathy as where "the helper strives to respond with great frequency to the other person's deeper feelings as well as to his or her superficial feelings". They feel that an empathic counsellor will produce improvement in a client whatever her theoretical orientation, but a combination of diagnostic accuracy and the ability to reflect feeling is most effective. Cartwright and Lerner (1963) suggest that there is no significant difference in the amount of therapist empathy with the client at the start of counselling for clients who show improvement compared with those who do not, but for clients who showed an improvement there was a significant gain in the therapists' empathy score over time. They also discovered that therapists obtained higher empathy scores at the beginning of counselling with opposite sex clients. Their definition of empathy is however different to Carkhuff and Berenson's. This is a problem with research that attempts to quantify concepts such as empathy, respect and genuineness. Each researcher has his or her own definition and their own methods of measurement and so making reliable comparisons of the results of different studies is difficult.

In all of these studies it is the researcher who defines and attempts to quantify the characteristics of a "good" therapist. Another approach is to ask clients or prospective clients what qualities they would like to find in a therapist.

Venzor, Gillis and Beal (1976) asked a group of clients and a group of student controls to read some scripts of a person talking to a counsellor using different response styles for the same problem.

They found clients and non-clients preferred the same styles of helping responses, and that these styles were similar to the response styles they expected from friends. Empathic responding, advice giving and interrogative responding were all considered equally satisfactory. However, when asked to describe their preferred counsellor all subjects chose nurturant adjectives.

Duckro et al (1979) suggest that there is a widely held assumption in psychotherapy literature that it is important that the client's expectation of her therapist is met; otherwise the therapy will not be a success. They review many studies which have attempted to measure the client's expectations and the impact they have on outcomes. Their conclusion is that there is insufficient evidence to say that this is an important factor in counselling success, partly because many of the studies are inadequate, either methodologically or in their underlying theory.

The evidence does seem to suggest however that clients want warm and empathic therapists and if therapists have these qualities they are more likely to be successful. These are qualities which are very difficult to quantify and measure.

Client Variables

Most of the research into client variables has concentrated on clients having individual psychotherapy rather than clients receiving marital counselling. The majority of the research has focused on the client's self image. It is usually hypothesised that when a client first comes for therapy her self image will be poor. The counselling process helps her to improve her self image and hence her ability to cope with her problems. Therefore successful therapy is equated with improvements in the client's self image.

There are several problems with this approach. One is that there is no standardised measure of self image - although in the past the Butler and Haigh Qsort was quite popular (Rogers and Dymond 1954); without a standard measure it is difficult to make accurate comparisons between the findings of different studies. Another problem is that the criteria for deciding what is a poor self image and a good self image are themselves unclear. The researchers usually decide on their own criteria which may not necessarily coincide with what the client would consider to be a poor or good self image. Most of the rating scales employed are used on the assumption that any changes in the client's score during the therapy must be the result of therapy. However, there is evidence to suggest that this may not be the case, Taylor (1955) using a Q sort test found evidence to suggest that without any therapy a person's self concept is not stable over time. Using student subjects tested twice one week apart he found a statistically significant improvement in their self image. Students who made 2 sorts a day for 5 days showed even bigger improvements. He does suggest that the gains reported in therapy studies are relatively greater than those he obtained. It is however difficult to know what this means since the measure he used was not used in the therapy studies.

Berdie (1954) compared two groups of new students. All the students were given self rating forms to fill in, and then half of them were encouraged to see the student counsellor. Six months later the rating scales were readministered. There were no significant differences between the two groups on any of the measures, but significantly more of the non-counselled group had left college at the end of 2 terms compared with the counselled group.

This suggests that some factor other than changes in student self image was actually the important one in the counselling process. Perhaps the counselled students perceived the college staff as more caring and helpful. Berdie does not report whether the students not offered counselling were discouraged from seeking it if they had problems. The fact that they were not offered it in the first place and that some of their colleagues were, may have made them feel less cared about. The evidence therefore that clients have poor self images and the critical factor in counselling is an improvement in their self images is not very convincing.

Heilbrun (1961) suggests that the length of time a client stays in therapy is a useful index of success in counselling which has the advantage of being objectively measureable. On this criterion more successful clients are of higher socio-economic class, better educated and more intelligent. Although Heilbrun's evidence is American there is English evidence from Heisler & Whitehouse (1976) that social class is a determinant of how long MGC clients stay in counselling. When the counsellor recorded the problem as involving the personal traits of either partner the average number of interviews for a client in social class 1 was 6.2 ; this declined through the social classes to an average of 2.9 for clients in social class 5. It is not necessarily the case however that the longer the case continues the more successful the outcome. Perhaps clients from higher social classes continue with counselling for longer before they admit to themselves that the counselling is not helping. It is also possible that there is a difference in the severity of the personal problems for clients of different social classes. Perhaps intelligent, well educated clients are more articulate and more able to resolve simple problems without help and so when they come for counselling their problems are more complex, and require more counselling time to sort out.

It could also unfortunately be the case that working class clients feel alienated from middle class counsellors and are therefore less likely to stay in counselling. The counsellor may also feel more able to help people she perceives as similar to herself in social background. More research is needed to find out whether working class clients are discouraged in some way from staying in counselling and are therefore not getting the help that they need.

Studies of the Interaction of Client and Counsellor Variables

The previous three sections have reviewed studies where researchers have studied some aspect of the counsellor or client which might influence the outcome of the counselling. It is however, in practice, difficult to completely isolate client or counsellor variables since all counselling sessions involve the interaction of the client and counsellor. Other researchers therefore have attempted to study the interaction of client and counsellor variables.

Since the client/counsellor interactions are more complex if there are two clients, as in marital counselling, most of the studies are from individual counselling sessions. Cartwright and Lerner (1963) measured the client's "need to change" and the counsellor's level of empathic understanding of a particular client, and found there was an interaction between the two variables. Clients who had a high "need to change" score showed most improvement from before therapy to after therapy, but the length of therapy was shorter if the therapist had a high empathy score for that client. Clients with low "need to change" scores did not improve during therapy, but they stayed longer in therapy if their therapists empathy score was high. The empathy score for the counsellor was unique to a particular client and did not mean that a therapist with a low score would have a low

score with another client, or that a different therapist would also have a low score with that client. This raises the question of whether improvement for a particular client is dependent on which therapist the client sees. Most research treats fully trained therapists of a particular school of thought as equivalent and interchangeable for research purposes. This is in practice very unlikely to be the case; each client and therapist has her own unique personality and set of attitudes and these personalities and attitudes interact during counselling. A given client may be helped a great deal by one therapist and not another, even though the therapists are equally skilled. It is possible that a client who has a high "need to change" will improve with many different therapists, and those with a low "need to change" will not do so however skilled their therapist. However, there may be clients with intermediate "need to change" scores, who need a compatible therapist in order to improve. Matching clients to therapists appropriately would require some sort of preliminary assessment to work out which client should be seen by which therapist. If Cartwright and Lerner's findings are correct, assigning clients to the correct therapist should not only improve outcomes it should reduce the number of hours each client spends in therapy before success is achieved. Zeimelis (1974) found that client's expectations of a counsellor had an impact on the therapeutic process. Clients who had been assigned to a counsellor who fulfilled their expectations rated him or her as more at ease and comfortable during a first interview than clients whose counsellor did not fulfill their expectations. If the clients were told

that the counsellor would not quite fulfil their expectations then their ratings were even less favourable than when the client was given no particular expectation. Counsellors can also develop negative expectations about a particular client and this may influence the counselling adversely.

NMGC counsellors do not normally know anything about their clients before they see them except their names and addresses. This means that the counsellor does not normally start the counselling with negative expectations except those based on the appearance of the clients. In some areas of the country the client's address may lead to the generation of a negative expectation, a housing estate that has a reputation for social problems for example. This is not really true in Milton Keynes, although there are one or two estates which have poor reputations, but they are also the estates with the most vacant properties so many newcomers to the city move into them because the address has no particular significance to them. This means a counsellor is unlikely to feel a particular address means that it is inevitable that she will be dealing with a "problem" family. In most cases the counsellors expectations will be based on the impression she forms of the client during the first counselling session.

Experienced counsellors are likely to have built up a picture of the type of person they feel will benefit from their counselling, based on their feelings about the outcomes of the cases they have dealt with. It is likely that whenever they see a new client they will compare the impression this client makes on them with their accumulated experience of similar types of clients. They may behave

differently towards the clients they feel will benefit from their counselling, they may be more patient for example. This could lead to a situation where the client whose counsellor feels she will not benefit from counselling stops coming because she can sense the counsellor's attitude and it deters her. Alternatively the counsellor's poor expectations may become a self fulfilling prophecy, and the client may not benefit as much from the counselling as she might have done with a more sympathetic counsellor. The counsellor's image of the type of man who would benefit from her counselling may be different from her image of the type of woman who would benefit from her counselling. In this society expectations of appropriate behaviour for men and women are different and certain personality characteristics are considered more desirable in men than in women and vice versa. The work of Swenson and Raggucci described earlier, suggests that therapists may have different pictures of the type of man and the type of woman that would benefit. Each counsellor is also likely to have her own unique ideas about who would benefit from her particular style of work. This therefore seemed a worthwhile aspect of counselling to investigate, and so the first study conducted as part of this research investigated whether marriage guidance counsellors do have their own unique image of who will benefit from their counselling. (See appendix 1 for a detailed description).

Counsellors were first asked to describe the kind of man or woman they felt would benefit from their counselling. Their verbal descriptions suggested that each counsellor did have her own unique view of who would benefit from her counselling. Counsellors images of "good" male and "good" female clients were later on measured using Blocks Q sort test.

The use of this test made it easier to compare different counsellor's images. The findings from this study supported the data from the earlier verbal report study suggesting that counsellors do indeed have slightly different images of the "good" client. It was intended that the research should be continued by asking the counsellors to assess the personalities of new clients. It was hypothesised that the new clients who conformed closest to the counsellor's image of the "good" client would be the ones most likely to stay in counselling and not drop out at an early stage. Unfortunately for practical reasons it was not possible to proceed to the second stage of this research. The study and the reasons why it was not possible to pursue it are discussed in Appendix 1.

Summary

It has been suggested in this chapter that it is very difficult to conduct a rigorous outcome study of marital counselling using an uncounselled control group. It is difficult adequately to define criteria of success and to find a suitable set of couples to form the control group. Outcome studies however can help to clarify what clients are looking for when they enter therapy and whether they feel they have found it. Although they may not be able to provide an unambiguous answer to the question "Does this form of therapy work"?

It is difficult to isolate counsellor or client variables and study them on their own since counselling is an interactive process. Studies of counsellor variables however do seem to suggest that it is important for the therapist to show warmth and empathy for her clients, although these characteristics are difficult to measure unambiguously. There is little evidence to suggest that certain types of people make "better" clients than others.

However the social class of the client does seem to have an impact on how long the client stays in therapy. When the interaction of client variables and counsellor variables is measured, there seems to be an interaction between the counsellor's empathy for the client and the client's "need to change" score. Clients expectations of their counsellor and whether these have been fulfilled also seem to influence the outcome of the counselling. A pilot study of marriage guidance counsellors suggested that they each have a picture of who is likely to benefit from their counselling. This may influence the counselling process and the outcome of the counselling, however it was not possible to go on and measure this.

The next chapter reviews some of the major studies of the counselling process.

COUNSELLING PROCESS STUDIES

Introduction

It was suggested in the previous chapter that even if an outcome study is well designed to provide an answer to the question "Does this form of therapy work?" it cannot answer the question "Why does it work"? Studies of client variables, counsellor variables and the interaction of client counsellor variables can provide some answers to the "why" question. However as the previous chapter suggested, isolating one or two variables and attempting to study them in isolation from other aspects of client counsellor interaction is difficult, and can only provide partial answers. Studying the counselling process itself is likely to be a more fruitful approach.

The researcher felt that attribution theory was a particularly useful theory to use to study the counselling process in marriage guidance counselling sessions. The next chapter will outline attribution theory and discuss its advantages and disadvantages as a suitable theory for analysing counselling sessions. This chapter will discuss the advantages and problems of the process approach in general and examine some of the other theoretical perspectives it would have been possible to use.

Problems of the Process Approach

The biggest problem with studying the process of client counsellor interaction is the amount of data to be analysed. Most counselling involves hour long sessions approximately once a week for several weeks or even months.

If the sessions are video taped for analysis so that the verbal and non verbal content can be analysed the amount of material to be studied is almost overwhelming. Gottman et al (1977) have estimated that a full analysis of one hour of video tape would take approximately 28 hours. If the results of the study are to be generalisable to other therapists and clients, many different sessions would need to be analysed. For this reason perhaps, detailed analysis of the actual content of counselling sessions is relatively rare, according to Howard (1983); for example the study of Hill et al (1983) is the first case study of process and outcome ever published by the Journal of Counselling Psychology.

There is a danger if a thorough analysis of all content levels of a counselling session is carried out not only that this will take an unrealistic amount of time, but that it will create so much data that it will be difficult to decide what is the most important information. Studying the content from a particular theoretical perspective has the advantage of reducing the analysis to more manageable proportions and increases the chances of finding at least some of the significant information. However, the quality and significance of the information is only as good as the quality of the theory used. If the theory is weak when the results of a process study based on that theory will be dubious. It could be argued that if useful results are obtained from the analysis then this helps to validate the theory but this is a circular argument and it is only valid if it were possible at least in principle to use the data obtained to disprove the theory.

Some theories used to study the counselling process are almost wholly clinically based; the theory has been "derived" from clinical observations and modified in the light of later clinical observations.

Psychoanalysis is probably the best known example of such a theory. Other theories are based on an interaction between clinical observations and psychological theory, communications theories being an example of this approach. There have been few attempts to apply laboratory-based psychological theories to the counselling process except perhaps the development of behavioural techniques for helping people resolve certain types of problems.

Clinically Based Theories

There are many of these theories and it is impossible to describe them all in detail: examples are psychoanalysis, Jungian analysis, transactional analysis, gestalt therapy etc. Most of these therapeutic approaches are about helping the individual with her problems in general rather than specifically marital problems. There are two ways a clinically based theory can be used. One is as a therapy tool; the therapist uses the theory in her work with the client, offering the client interpretations for her problems based on that theory. The other use of a clinical theory is as a research instrument to analyse the content of the therapy sessions. In practice this distinction is blurred; the researcher and therapist may be the same person and even if they are not it is usual for the therapist and the researcher to share the same theoretical approach. It is very rare for the researcher to use a clinical theory to analyse the content of therapy sessions based on a different approach; it is also in practice difficult to do so meaningfully. A researcher who subscribes to psychoanalytic theory, for example, may postulate that transference is an important part of the therapeutic process if clients are to successfully resolve their problems. She may find evidence for transference occurring when she analyses therapy sessions of a psychoanalytic therapist, but she may not find any evidence of transference taking place if

she analyses the sessions of a behavior therapist. This does not mean that transference is not occurring, nor does it mean that transference is not an important process in psychoanalysis. Each therapeutic approach may be emphasising different aspects of the therapeutic process. Since they all use rather different language to express their ideas it may also be hard without making numerous inferences to find evidence for the presence of a process considered important in one therapeutic approach in the sessions of a therapist from a different approach. The behaviour therapists client may feel her therapist is just like her mother but because the focus of the therapy is the present rather than the past she may never put that feeling into words.

It is therefore in practice difficult to use any of the clinically based theories to analyse the counselling sessions of MG counsellors. Most counsellors do not subscribe to a particular theoretical approach; many of them borrow ideas from several different theories, and they may use different theories with different cases. This may be a more general problem with marital therapy Skynner (1980) points out that psychodynamically orientated practitioners may use psychodynamic theory to help a couple gain insight into their problems, but they are likely to use a number of different interventions to help the couple resolve their difficulties. The interventions are not derived from psychoanalytic theory and in some cases have been borrowed from other theoretical approaches such as behaviourism. If the couple resolve their problems it is therefore impossible to say whether that was due to the psychoanalytic insight the couple gained or the techniques used to help them change their behaviour, or a combination of both.

Systems Theory

The basic concept behind systems theory is that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts and cannot be explained simply from a knowledge of the operation of the parts. Fisch et al (1982) define the systems viewpoint as "the understanding and explanation of any selected bit of behaviour in terms of its place in a wider ongoing organised system of behaviour, involving feedback and reciprocal reinforcement throughout".

The systems theorist believes that the marital relationship cannot be understood just from a study of the partners as individuals without a study of their interaction. This is a belief which is shared by most MG counsellors. There is a hierarchy of systems, so a local community is a system within the national community and families are systems within the local community and individual family members are sub-systems within the family. All who believe in systems theory accept these basic principles and most family therapy is based on them, although in practice therapists seldom pay much attention to a wider system than the family. There are, however, different schools of family therapy and they each emphasise different aspects of the theory so it is perhaps more accurate to talk about systems theories and family therapies.

Most of the research literature in family therapy is case history based. Gottman (1979) and Rakoff (1984) both feel there should be more testing of some of the basic assumptions on which family therapy operates. Gottman suggests that "hypotheses continue to be accepted by repetition in the same spirit in which American advertising sells its products". Campbell and Carteret (1984) studied the therapy process in the family therapy done by themselves and some colleagues, hoping

to identify the family interactions which changed as a result of the therapy. They found they were unable to do this and that it was difficult to find a suitable level at which to study the interactions between clients, and between clients and therapist. If they broke the behaviour down into small measurable segments they could achieve reasonable agreement between independent raters but it was difficult to interpret the results. If they tried measuring the behaviour more globally it seemed more meaningful but the reliability between the raters was poorer. There is not therefore at the moment, a methodology for studying the therapy process in family therapy other than detailed case description.

Communication Theories

These theories, which overlap with the systems approach, are derived principally from ideas of schizophrenic communication, particularly the ideas of Bateson et al (1956). They suggest that one of the causes of schizophrenic behaviour is when an individual is brought up within a family who give him messages containing conflicting demands but do not allow him to acknowledge the conflicts openly. The rationale for using these theories for studying marital interaction is the idea that one cause of marital distress is an inability to communicate effectively. All MG counsellors would agree that difficulties in communication are an important element in many, if not all, couples problems.

Most of the research into marital communication has not been done by studying the content of counselling sessions but by comparing "normal" and "abnormal" families' patterns of communication on a particular issue or how they resolve conflicts. This can lead to problems of definition of "normal" and "abnormal".

Blakar (1981) defined abnormal families as families in which one child is schizophrenic, matched families with a non-schizophrenic child constituted the normal sample. The husband of each couple was given the task of tracing a route on a map from the verbal instructions of his wife. There was a deliberate error on one of the maps so the task was actually impossible unless the couple could work out that the maps were different and discover what the difference was. All of the five normal couples succeeded in working out that the maps were different and solved the problem, but only one of the abnormal couples was able to succeed. This suggests that there were indeed differences in communication technique between the two groups. These differences may reflect general communication problems within the couple's relationship but they may not. This task is not really very similar to the kinds of every day problem that couples have to communicate about. It would be interesting to ask couples who came as clients to try the task, but the same problem is raised as with outcome studies: how to find an adequate control group.

Knudson et al (1980) studied conflict resolution by asking volunteer couples to re-enact a major conflict that had recently taken place in their relationship. The couple were afterwards interviewed separately about their perceptions of the argument. They found two general strategies of coping with the conflict: engagement and avoidance. Couples who used the engagement strategy did not necessarily reach agreement, but they each enhanced their understanding of the other's point of view. The avoidance sub group showed less actual agreement but the partners felt their spouse agreed with them more than their spouse actually agreed. This research is not comparing communications techniques used by happily married and unhappily married couples so it is impossible to say that one technique is characteristic of poor marital relationships and the other good.

It may even be the case that many couples use both techniques and that if Knudson et al had asked their couples to re-enact more than one conflict they would have sometimes used engagement and sometimes avoidance.

Gottman et al (1977) studied communication differences between distressed and non-distressed couples. His distressed couples were referred from counselling agencies or replied to an advertisement asking for couples who felt their marriage was unsatisfactory. The non-distressed couples had replied to an advertisement asking for couples who felt their marriage was mutually satisfying. Couples had to discuss a problem area from their marriage and come to a mutually satisfactory resolution of the issue. It was found that unhappy couples were more likely to enter a cross complaining loop and less likely to end with some sort of contract. However, it is not possible to say whether this is cause or effect, the poor communication could be the cause of the marital unhappiness or it could be the consequence of other problems. If a woman has discovered her husband is having an affair, for example, this will colour her attitude to problem solving in general and affect the way she communicates. So although there is evidence that different patterns of communication exist and that some are more effective than others, there is not yet enough evidence to say a particular pattern of communication is characteristic of a good relationship and another of a poor. This means that it is not possible to analyse the changes (if any) in communication techniques used by a couple during therapy and say these changes reflect an improvement in their relationship. The other difficulty of applying communication theory to MG counselling sessions is a practical one, it is only in a minority of cases that the counsellor sees both partners together throughout the counselling.

It would be possible to study the communication between the counsellor and the client but it cannot be assumed that the client communicates in the same way with her partner.

Behavioural Theory

Behaviour therapy is based on the assumption that when a couple have problems in their interaction, these problems have arisen through faulty learning. The couple need to learn new skills that they have not acquired during their childhood and adolescence, or unlearn "skills" which are maladaptive and replace them with better ones. Because the emphasis is on improving the couples relationship, behaviour therapy is only appropriate for couples who are committed to staying together, and since they are expected to carry out tasks together at home they usually need to be living together. The focus of the therapy is normally on two aspects of the relationship: communication skills and problem solving. The couple are normally given a series of tasks to do at home, of slowly increasing difficulty, to enable them to acquire and practice new skills. The therapist is considered to be of minor importance, therefore, and few process studies are conducted into the behavioural approach; the research is focused on outcome studies. Clients are often given pre and post therapy questionnaires rating their satisfaction with different aspects of their relationship, and a follow up interview and questionnaire six months after treatment ends. Consequently behaviour therapy is probably the best validated form of marital therapy in terms of clients' ratings of satisfaction with their relationship. However, the theoretical basis for behaviour therapy is, in fact, weak. There is no evidence from communications theory research that a particular method of communication is characteristic of a good relationship.

Similarly there is no real evidence to suggest that couples with good relationships are using the problem solving skills taught to clients during behaviour therapy. Gottman concludes "Behavioural marital therapy research to date meets the criterion of effectiveness but not the criterion of understanding process and the research is in the somewhat embarrassing position of having to explain the effectiveness of a complex multi component programme, the design of which, was not based on a sound empirical footing".

Interpersonal Perception Theories

How client and counsellor perceive each other is likely to influence the counselling process. Common sense would suggest that counselling is likely to be more successful if client and counsellor have favourable impressions of each other. The problem is how to measure interpersonal perception. Client and counsellor can be asked at the end of each session how they perceive each other, either by interviewing them both or asking them to fill in a grid or questionnaire. Caskey et al (1984) have attempted to study clients' and therapists' perceptions of the counselling process. They sampled therapists' responses at different points in a therapy session and afterwards played tape recordings of the responses to client and therapist separately. For each response the therapist was asked "what were you trying to do in saying that?", and the clients were asked "what do you think your therapist was trying to do in saying that?". They found that on the whole agreement between therapist and client was poor. They suggest that their evidence shows that therapists have "little awareness of the immediate impact of their responses". Responses rated as most helpful by the therapists tended to be rated as average by the client and vice versa. Studies of this sort may be helpful in allowing the therapist to be more aware of the impact they are having on the client.

There is however a practical problem for using either of these approaches to study marriage guidance counselling sessions. Counsellors tend to be very protective about their clients and reluctant to allow access to them to anyone else even another counsellor. Video taping takes away the clients anonymity in a way which audio taping does not. Counsellors are very unlikely to give permission for their sessions to be video taped or for their clients to be questioned after the counselling session.

Attitude Theories

Attitudes can play an important role in a marital interaction. Clients who come for counselling may have a wholly or partly negative attitude towards their partner or the marital relationship. Theoretical treatments of attitude tend to see attitudes either as internal predispositions which have a causal influence on behaviour or as behaviour (Lalljee et al 1984). However, the research evidence does not show a strong link between behaviour and attitude. Within the context of counselling clients will often imply an attitude from a behaviour rather than the other way round. The fact that her husband goes to the pub every night leads a wife to conclude that he doesn't care about her. The wife who is getting very tired because she has two small children to look after may be irritable or go off sex. Her bad temper or lack of sexual desire may be seen by her husband to imply that she no longer cares about him.

Another problem with measuring attitudes in a counselling context is that it isn't necessarily an actual attitude that creates a problem it is a perceived attitude. The wife in the example above may insist that her feelings for her husband are unchanged, her changed behaviour is due to her changed circumstances, but her husband may not believe her.

It is therefore not necessarily an actual attitude or behaviour that is important in the marital interaction, it is how the partners interpret behaviour and imply attitudes and in general try to make sense of what is happening to them in their relationship that is important.

Personal Construct Theory

There are similarities between personal construct theory and attribution theory. The fundamental postulate of personal construct theory is that 'A person's processes are psychologically channelled by the ways in which he anticipates events' (Bannister and Fransella 1971). In other words the individual uses his views of how people react to predict the future. If his predictions are accurate they confirm his construct system. If they are not, then he needs to modify one or more of his constructs. The theory was first developed by G.A. Kelly who has described how he believes people arrive at their constructs and modify them, and the consequences for the individual of holding "faulty" constructs.

H.H. Kelley describes attribution theory as "A theory about how people make causal explanations about how they answer questions beginning with why?" (1973). The emphasis of the two theories when stated in this way appears to be different; G.A. Kelly is interested in the future and how people anticipate events; H.H. Kelley is looking backwards at how people have explained the past. However, in practice, this distinction is blurred since both men accept that the past influences the future and the future eventually becomes the past.

The theories have developed along divergent paths. Attribution theory started as a laboratory based theory with hypotheses tested experimentally, with an emphasis on finding similarities between people in the way that they make attributions.

Personal construct theory was from the start an individual based theory with the emphasis placed on the differences between peoples' constructs.

Kelly developed a technique called the repertory grid for measuring an individual's constructs and discovering which were the most important. This technique has been used in therapy to enable the client to have a better understanding of his own construct system and its weaknesses and to help him modify constructs which are causing him problems.

The researcher decided that she did not want to use the repertory grid technique since it is not a normal part of marriage guidance counselling practice and would inevitably change the client counsellor interaction if used during a counselling session. However, it would be possible to use the transcript of a counselling session to study the constructs the client appeared to be using as she described her marital problems. It is likely that these would be the constructs of greatest importance to her.

The researcher decided that she preferred to use attribution theory because aspects of the theory have been tested extensively in the laboratory. The theory is also now being used to analyse marital problems and look at what goes on in therapy sessions.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter has argued that the study of the counselling process can be very helpful in finding out why a client has benefited from the counselling she has received. A detailed analysis of one or two cases can provide useful information but it is perhaps better to carry out a somewhat less exhaustive study of a larger number of cases since the results can be more generalisable to other cases and other counsellors.

In order to carry out an effective analysis of the counselling process that is not too time consuming, it is probably best to analyse the material from the perspective of a particular theory. This theory needs preferably to be well researched so that any findings from the research can be put into a wider context.

Since marriage guidance counsellors do not all use the same theoretical perspective in their work, it was felt that the clinical theories would not be of great value in analysing counselling sessions. Theories therefore which deal directly with the factual content of the counselling session seem preferable rather than ones which require interpretation. Concentrating on what client and counsellor say to each other, rather than how they say it both verbally and non verbally has the advantage of reducing the amount of information that needs to be collected and reducing the interference with the counselling process. If the collection process involves anything other than passive recording of the counselling session, the act of collecting the data inevitably alters the clients interaction with the counsellor.

Counsellors are not accustomed to using questionnaires or repertory grids with clients, and clients are not normally asked to discuss the counselling process with another person. Theories which require the use of any of these techniques to study the counselling are therefore inevitably altering the material under study. All methods of data collection have some influence but these influences can be minimised by using passive methods of collection.

Studying the verbal content of counselling sessions suggests that communications theories would be useful for studying counselling sessions. However, their disadvantage is that in many cases only one partner comes for counselling so the counsellor never witnesses

the communication between the couple. She only hears about it second-hand. It would be possible to study the nature of the communication between counsellor and client but this is likely to be very different to the communication between the client and her partner. Even when both partners come for counselling the presence and intervention of the counsellor means that the communication between the couple will be different from the communication at home. Many clients comment that they cannot discuss issues at home in the way they can in the counselling session.

It is possible however to study the way the client communicates about her marriage - the account she gives of it. This account has an important bearing on how she reacts within her marriage. The explanations she finds for her own and her husbands' behaviour will have an influence on her future behaviour. This future behaviour will then have an influence on her explanations and so on. This is why attribution theory was felt to be particularly suitable for studying the counselling process. The client comes to counselling expecting to have to explain her problems, she is also likely to want to justify her own actions and she will be interpreting her partners' behaviour. The counsellor does not listen passively to the client's account she is likely to intervene by asking questions, seeking clarification and possibly offering alternative explanations for some of the problems. This client counsellor interaction is then likely to influence the client's account of her marriage. She might then use this altered account to modify her behaviour, this in turn will further influence her account. Attribution theory is essentially a tool for studying these accounts.

Attribution theory, its strengths and weaknesses as a theory, and a research tool for analysing marital counselling sessions will be described and discussed in the next chapter.

ATTRIBUTION THEORY

Introduction

It was Heider in his book The Psychology of Interpersonal Relationships (1958) who laid the foundations of attribution theory. Many psychologists since then have developed and modified his ideas, so that it is not really possible to say that there is a single theory called attribution theory. There are several theories about how the lay person makes sense of the world around him and makes causal judgments about his own and other peoples actions.

This chapter will review the major theories and the relevant experimental evidence to support them. Some of the theories do not have experimental supporting evidence since they are essentially critiques of other theories.

There have been attempts to use the ideas from attribution theory outside the laboratory. Some researchers have been interested in how attributions are used in close personal relationships such as marriage. There have been a number of investigations of the type of attributions couples make and whether there are any differences between husbands' and wives' attributions, for example. The attributions made retrospectively about the break up of their relationships by divorced women have been explored. There have also been attempts to use attribution theory as a model to explain some psychotherapeutic processes. The fact that attempts have been made to apply attribution theory to both marriage and the psychotherapeutic process suggests that it might be a very suitable theory to use to investigate the content of MGC counselling sessions.

Kelley's Theory

Kelley (1973) suggests that "Attribution theory is a theory about how people make causal explanations about how they answer questions beginning with why? It deals with the information they use in making causal inferences and with what they do with this information to answer causal questions". He considers that all judgments of the type "Property X characterises Entity Y" are attributions. Kelley suggests that the lay attributor acts like a scientist who assesses the evidence and chooses the most probable explanation from the range available. For example, Schacter and Singer (1962) gave subjects adrenalin injections and put them in a situation likely to cause either euphoria or anger. Subjects who were not told of the side effects of the drug attributed their emotions to the situation, those who were told attributed their emotions to the drug. In other words the latter group had assessed the evidence and chosen one of the two possible causes of their emotions as the likely one. This experiment also shows that the explanation arrived at may not necessarily be "correct" in a strictly scientific sense; it is merely the best explanation the attributor is able to find from the evidence available at the time either in the immediate situation or from the persons knowledge of previous situations and experiences. If the lay attributor makes a rational choice based on the evidence available to him, he must have criteria for deciding what is relevant evidence and for deciding how much weight to give to different classes of evidence. Kelley suggests that three classes of information are used to make an attribution: information about the person about whom the attribution is being made, information about the entities with which the person is interacting (these may be other people),

and information about changes in the circumstances over time. He suggests that in order to assess the relative importance of these three factors the attributor assesses the evidence for distinctiveness - does the person behave this way only in the presence of a particular entity (high distinctiveness) or will many different entities lead to this behaviour (low distinctiveness); consensus - would other people behave the same way with the same entity; and consistency - does the person react the same way each time he is in the presence of the entity?

Kelley is not suggesting the lay attributor is consciously aware that he is making these assessments each time he makes an attribution. In other words attribution theory is really an attempt to explain what exactly people are doing when they use their "common sense" to arrive at an explanation for an event.

McArthur (1972) investigated Kelley's ideas by attempting to find out to what extent distinctiveness, consensus and consistency information influences the choice of person, entity and circumstance attributions. She presented subjects with brief written scenarios such as "John laughs at the comedian" together with information about consensus (do other people laugh at the comedian?) distinctiveness (does John laugh at other comedians?) and consistency (has John laughed at this comedian in the past?). She found that person attributions were more likely to be made when consensus and distinctiveness were low and consistency was high. Entity attributions were more frequent when consensus and distinctiveness and consistency were all high.

Circumstance attributions were more likely when distinctiveness was high and consistency low, consensus information seeming not to have a significant effect. These results provide evidence that the lay attributor may indeed assess the evidence available to him in the way that Kelley suggests. Other researchers who have investigated consensus, consistency and distinctiveness information and its influence on the attribution process are Nesdale (1983) and Zuckerman (1978a, 1978b). Jones et al (1961) also conducted an experiment which in effect manipulated distinctive information and found this influenced subjects' attributions of personality characteristics to the actor. An interesting consequence of perceiving the lay attributor as behaving like a scientist assessing evidence is that, the actor in a given situation may make different attributions to an observer since the evidence available to them can be different. Schacter and Singer for example, observing their subjects, are likely to have attributed their subjects' mood to the adrenaline whichever experimental group they were in.

Situational and Dispositional Attributions

Jones and Nisbett (1971) argue that "there is a pervasive tendency for actors to attribute their actions to situational requirements whereas observers tend to attribute the same actions to stable personal dispositions." They accept that the lay attributor behaves like a scientist assessing information but they suggest the relevant categories are cause and effect. It is possible for an actor and observer to have similar knowledge of the effects of an action but the observer's knowledge is often incomplete as to cause; he does not always perceive the actor's mood in the same way as the actor, for example, particularly if the actor is

trying to conceal his feelings, although he can know as much about the outcome of an act as the actor. The actor is likely to have greater knowledge of the antecedent causes of the act and greater knowledge of his own intentions and whether the outcome of the act is as he intended. This greater knowledge on the part of the actor makes it more likely that he will make situational attributions, since the observer knows much less about antecedent causes he is more likely to attribute the actors behaviour to her personality.

In terms of Kelley's model of the attribution process the observer is likely to have less information about the actor in the distinctiveness and consistency categories than the actor has about himself, and this must alter the nature of the attributions made if Kelley's model is valid. It means the observer will have to put greater reliance on consensus information from his own experiences and observations, i.e. how likely is it that anyone else would behave this way in this situation. A reliance on a comparison between the actor and others is likely to lead to the observer deducing personality differences between the actor and others and hence making attributions on the basis of the actor's perceived personality.

Jones and Nisbett also suggest there are differences in the way actors and observers process the information available to them because different aspects of the information are salient to actors and observers. The observer is likely to perceive the environment as stable and focus in on changes in the behaviour of the actor. The actor, however, is likely to focus his attention on environmental cues which he perceives as shaping his behaviour. These differences

in attention are likely to mean that the observer will tend to make attributions about the changes in his situation. There is supporting evidence for these propositions, although unfortunately many of the experiments do not actually ask for the actors and observers perceptions of the same event. McArthur found that her subjects tended to explain the actions described in terms of personality characteristics of the "hero" of the story rather than in terms of his situation. Nisbett et. al (1973) asked subjects to volunteer to take part in a particular task and then asked them how likely it was that they would volunteer for another task, observers of the subjects' behaviour being asked the same question. They found that the observers were much more likely to believe that the volunteering subjects would volunteer for something else than the subjects themselves, and similarly the observers were more likely to believe the non volunteering subjects wouldn't volunteer for something else than the non volunteers. In a more naturalistic experiment Nisbett et al (1973) asked male college students to write paragraphs about their choice of girlfriend and major subject and their best friend's choice of girlfriend and major subject. They also had to write about themselves as if their best friend was writing. When describing their own choice of girlfriend subjects gave more than twice as many reasons referring to the girl than reasons referring to themselves. When writing about their best friend's choice of girlfriend they gave almost equal numbers of reasons referring to their friend and to his girlfriend. When describing choice of major subject the students gave similar numbers of reasons referring to themselves and properties of the subject, but for their best friend's

choice of major subject they gave four times as many dispositional reasons as reasons referring to the major subject. The subjects were, however, capable of adopting an observer's perspective to their own behaviour. When writing about themselves as if their best friend was writing subjects gave equal numbers of reasons for their choice of girlfriend referring to themselves and their girlfriend, and four times as many dispositional reasons as reasons referring to the subject when explaining their choice of major subject.

Regan and Totten (1975) obtained a similar result when they instructed subjects to either observe a video tape of an interaction or watch and empathise with one of the actors. The subjects instructed to empathise gave relatively more situational and less dispositional attributions than observer subjects. Gould and Sigall (1977) conducted a similar experiment but after watching the video (of a man attempting to make a good impression on a woman) subjects were either told he had succeeded or that he had failed. Observer subjects made more dispositional attributions whatever the outcome, but subjects asked to empathise gave more dispositional attributions when the outcome was successful and more situational attributions when it was not. In conclusion, therefore, there is experimental evidence that actors and observers do make different types of attributions about the same event. Actors make more situational attributions about their behaviour than dispositional. Observers of the actors' behaviour make more dispositional than situational attributions.

Attitude Attributions

Nisbett and Valins (1971) suggest that some experiments designed to test attitude theories can be re-interpreted

using attribution theory. Bem (1967) suggested that people infer their own attitudes from their behaviour; i.e. the individual processes the information at his disposal (his overt behaviour) and comes to a conclusion (the inference of an attitude). Kelley's model of the process involved in making an attribution is similar, the actor assesses the information available to him and makes an attribution about a particular act.

Bem used his theory to re-interpret the results of dissonance theory experiments, particularly the finding that subjects rate a boring task that they have to tell others is interesting as more interesting when the reward they are given is small. Bem suggests that in the large reward condition the reward is sufficient justification to the subject for saying the task is interesting so he need not change his attitude to the task. However, in the lower reward task there isn't a sufficient external reason for calling the task interesting so the subject has to infer a change of attitude. If people do process information in this way it should mean that an interesting task for which a high reward is offered should be rated as less interesting than an interesting task with a low reward. Nisbett and Valins quote a study where nursery school children were given an interesting task to do (drawing with special pens) half being promised a reward, the others not, although, in fact, they were all given the reward. When the children were offered the pens to draw with again those who had not expected a reward the first time used them more than the children who had expected a reward. This implies that the expected reward provided the explanation to the children for their use of the pens and they rated them less interesting.

The problem with Bem's theory is that it implies attitudes and behaviour are invariably correlated, although in fact they are not. Nisbett and Valins suggest that attribution theory can explain why they are not. They suggest that one piece of behaviour is not necessarily enough to change an attitude. It may simply introduce attributional instability which is followed by information seeking and hypothesis testing before a changed attitude is concluded. For example Valins and Nisbett (1967) found that subjects given arousal feed back that suggested they were not frightened of snakes were able to approach the snakes more closely than before, but they reported that their fear of snakes was unchanged. Nisbett and Valins suggest that if they are correct, a weak manipulation of attitude change might produce greater behaviour change than strong manipulation, since hypothesis testing may not be necessary after a strong manipulation.

Motivation and Intention Attributions

Jones and Davis (1965) have suggested that when making attributions about motives and intentions the lay attributor acts more like a lawyer than a scientist. A lawyer has to distinguish between levels of responsibility for a crime.

Jones and Davis suggest that there are three levels of responsibility used by the lay person:-

- "1. Intentional (P did X to enjoy the immediate effects of X).
2. Incidental (P did X as a means of getting to Y).
3. Accidental (X was a consequence of P's action that he neither intended nor wanted)"

They suggest that when an observer witnesses a particular action and infers an intention from it he is usually also (perhaps indirectly) making a statement about the actor's

personality. The degree of confidence the observer feels in his judgment depends on how closely the observed behaviour corresponds to how other people behave in similar situations. For example Jones et al (1961) conducted an experiment where subjects listened to tape recordings of role played job interviews for sub-mariner or astronaut. The ideal sub-mariner was described as "other directed" and the ideal astronaut as "inner directed". The subjects had much greater confidence in their personality ratings of the interviewee when his replies indicated that his directedness "was opposite to the expected one for the job". Results such as these lead Jones and Davis to suggest that "Given an attribute effect linkage which is offered to explain why an act occurred, correspondence increases as the judged value of the attribute departs from the judge's conception of the average person's standing on that attribute".

Success and Failure Attributions

Weiner et al (1971) have produced a model to describe the attribution process the lay person uses when trying to explain a success or failure. This is therefore a more limited attribution theory model than the previous ones since it only applies to events which the individual perceives in terms of success or failure. Weiner suggests that in order to explain or predict a particular outcome, the lay attributor categorises the evidence into ability (A), effort (E) task difficulty (T) and luck (L), and makes an assessment on the basis of the relative importance of these elements in any particular case. Ability and effort are qualities of the actor over which he has control (he can try harder or take more lessons), therefore, Weiner suggests that they correspond to an internal locus of control. Task difficulty and luck

however, are external to the actor and are factors over which he has not control therefore Weiner considers that they correspond to an external locus of control. Weiner considers that ability and task difficulty are more stable than effort and luck, therefore, ability, task difficulty, effort and luck can be classified by two dimensions, locus of control and stability.

Table 5.1

Classification Scheme for the Perceived Determinants of Achievement Behaviour (from Weiner 1971)

| Stability | Locus of Control | |
|-----------|------------------|-----------------|
| Stable | INTERNAL | EXTERNAL |
| | Ability | Task difficulty |
| Unstable | Effort | Luck |

Weiner assumes that in general equivalent information is employed and identical inferences reached whether the individual is judging themselves or some-one else. Perceived ability at a task is related to past successes, task difficulty is assessed from knowledge of how easy or difficult most other people find the task. Success when others have failed or vice versa is likely to be attributed to an internal cause.

In order to find out the inter-relationships between the categories Frieze and Weiner told subjects the percentage

success an individual had had at an unspecified task (it was either 100%, 50% or 0%), the percentage success the individual had had at similar tasks (again either 100%, 50% or 0%) and the percentage of other individuals successful at that task (100%, 50% or 0%). Weiner considers these correspond to consistency, distinctiveness and consensus in Kelley's classification. The final piece of information was whether the individual had succeeded or failed at the task on his most recent attempt. The subjects then rated how much that success or failure was attributable to luck, task difficulty ability or effort. The greatest attributions to luck and effort were made when the individual succeeded after previously failing or vice versa. When past behaviour and present performance were consistent attributions were more likely to be on the basis of task difficulty or ability. Success was most likely to be attributed to ability if the individual always succeeded when others did not. The results also showed that success was more likely to be attributed to internal causes than failure, and failure was more likely to be attributed to external causes. Although these results are generally true, Weiner and Kukla have found that men high in achievement motivation are significantly more likely to attribute success to themselves than men low in achievement motivation; there is a similar trend for female subjects but the results are not usually significant. Subjects high in achievement motivation are also more likely to attribute failure to bad luck or lack of effort than lack of ability, while those low in achievement motivation are more likely to attribute failure to lack of ability. This means that those who are high in achievement motivation are more likely to try again.

Although Weiner believes that actors and observers will make similar attributions, Beckman has found that teachers believe they are more responsible for changes from poor to good performance than changes in the opposite direction, whereas a group of observers came to the opposite conclusion. This finding is more in line with the Jones and Nisbett suggestion that observers and actors will make different attributions because they have access to different information. Beckman's result is interesting because if teachers are more inclined to take credit for improvement and deny responsibility for deterioration, do therapists have a tendency to do the same thing? May be they feel responsible for improvements in their clients, but feel that no improvement or deterioration is the responsibility of the client?

Kruglanski's Theory

Kruglanski (1975) argues that the division of causes of behaviour into internal and external to the person should be replaced by an endogenous/exogenous distinction (analogous to means and ends). An endogenous attribution of an action is when that action is attributed to itself as a reason. An exogenous attribution is an attribution to an end. Kruglanski points out that an internal/external causes dichotomy, although it appears unambiguous, actually is not; for example, studies of motivation assume that the actor's interest in a task is the internal cause and a monetary reward the external cause of his behaviour, but it is possible to argue that the drive for money is an internal cause of behaviour and the task itself is external to the actor.

Kruglanski also suggests that the incidents to which attributional analyses are applied can be categorised as

occurrences or actions, the distinction being that actions are voluntary and occurrences are not. An actor cannot guarantee an occurrence will have the outcome he would like; he cannot be sure he will win a race, for example, however much he wants to. An occurrence is not the same as an external attribution; winning a race is a combination of ability and effort, both factors internal to the actor and external factors, the condition of the race course, the ability of the other contestants for example. Actions contrast with occurrences because the sole causes are internal to the actor. Going for a run for example, is an action it requires only the effort of the actor.

Kruglanski's ideas however have not been tested experimentally and so their main value is in pointing out difficulties in applying the other theories in the real world.

Integration of the Theories

The different theories of the attribution process may not be mutually exclusive, although they can seem so when laboratory experiments are designed. This is because in an experimental context a situation is reduced to what the experimenter considers to be its bare essentials. The information given to the subject is minimal and focuses on the aspects of the attribution process the experimenter is interested in. In real life when people are making attributions about their own behaviour or that of a close friend or relative they have much more information available to them than the subject has in an experiment; consequently they may well not make one attribution but several about the same action. For example, when a woman discovers her husband is having an affair, she can think of all the occasions when she has denied him sex and make a person attribution - "It's my fault I'm not sexy enough." She can seek

an explanation in the personality of her husband - "He is weak willed." She can look at the situation - "Several of his colleagues are having affairs and he didn't want to be different." Or perhaps "This woman is so attractive that no normal man would have been able to say no if she made a pass." These explanations fit McArthur's person, entity and circumstance categories. She can also make an attitude attribution either about her husband in particular - "He thinks a man would be daft to turn down a good offer." Or about society in general "Men think it's OK for them to have affairs." She may look for ulterior motives underlying the behaviour - "He just wanted to make me suffer because of what I did last year." She may think in terms of success or failure either as cause or effect - "He has had an affair because I have failed as a wife"-
or "Because he has had an affair I'm a failure." Alternatively she may think in terms of his failure - "He is no longer a good husband because he has had an affair." These explanations are not mutually exclusive she may consider them all and feel that all of them are true to some extent or she may focus on only one or two of them. When speaking to others she is likely to choose her explanation to suit her audience; she may say one thing to her best friend and another to her parents. Which explanation seems the most important to her may also vary from day to day according to her mood; when she feels low she may blame herself more, and when she feels angry she may blame her husband more. When people make attributions about significant events in their lives, the theories are therefore perhaps not mutually exclusive but complimentary each one dealing with one aspect of a complex process.

McArthur's experiment in fact, provides some evidence that many different types of evidence are used when a person makes an attribution and the nature of the evidence can influence the nature of the attribution. In her experiment subjects were only allowed to pick one explanation so there was only the mixed category to show that people might choose more than one explanation. However, she classified her experimental sentences into four groups according to the nature of the verb in the sentence. There were emotion sentences, accomplishment sentences, opinion sentences and action sentences. The accomplishment sentences, e.g. 'George translates the sentence incorrectly' can be considered to be statements about success or failure. When McArthur analysed the attributions made in terms of the sentence category she did find some significant effects. For the experimental subjects, however, there was always a greater percentage of the total variance attributable to consensus, distinctiveness and consistency. Only 0.97% of the variance in person attributions was accounted for by sentence category compared with 21.72% for distinctiveness information. There was a greater frequency of person attributions for accomplishments and actions than for emotions and opinions. Stimulus attributions however were significantly more frequent for emotion and opinion sentences than for accomplishment and action sentences, altogether verb category accounted for 2.85% of the variance. Sentence category did not have a significant effect on the frequency of circumstance or mixed person stimulus attributions. When no consensus consistency or distinctiveness information is given (in the control condition) the importance of the sentence category is greatly increased - it accounted for 57.44% of the variance in person attributions and 51.02% of

the variance in stimulus attributions. There were more person attributions for accomplishment and action sentences but more stimulus attributions for emotion and opinion sentences. Verb category accounted for 68.68% of the variance in circumstance attributions, action and accomplishment sentences having more circumstance attributions than emotion and opinion sentences. For mixed person stimulus attributions sentence category accounted for 48.31% of the variance with emotion and accomplishment sentences having more than action and opinion sentences.

These results do seem to suggest that perhaps the lay attributor uses different strategies for making attributions in different contexts. There seems to be a tendency to see the actor as responsible for accomplishments and actions and to see the stimulus as producing a reaction in the actor in the form of an emotion or an opinion, which seems to be implying the lay attributor sees an actor as less responsible for his emotions and opinions than his actions or failures and achievements.

Methodological Problems

The most basic problem within attribution theory experiments is a lack of definitions. Few researchers actually define what an attribution is, papers are written on the assumption that everybody knows what it is and that every researcher defines it in the same way. As a consequence, results from different experiments are compared as if the word is used the same way in all papers, and this is not necessarily the case.

Eiser (1980) has defined the interpersonal attribution process as 'the process or processes by which we come to attribute various dispositions, motives, intentions, abilities and responsibilities to one another - in short how we come to describe each other in particular ways.' This

definition is circular since it contains the word attribute in it and it is very wide if it includes all attempts to describe other people. Since the definition deals with interpersonal attributions it does not cover the attributions we make about ourselves. Hamilton (1980) has defined attribution as 'Attribution per se generally refers to a simplifying procedure by which one assigns (attributes) an event to a subset of possible causes, but it may refer to subsequent dispositional judgments about the causal agent or situational factors.' This is a better definition but it is not clear what a dispositional judgment about a situation factor is?

No-one adequately defines the subcategories of attributions they use. Different papers subclassify attributions in different ways. Gould and Sigall use an 11-point scale for their subjects to make their attributions, the extremes of the scale are labelled - 'Dispositional factors: characteristics of the male' and 'Situational factors: characteristics of the encounter setting and or characteristics of the female.' This not only assumes that characteristics of the setting and characteristics of the female are equivalent but also assumes that dispositional factors and situational factors form a bipolar scale. Subjects are not offered any alternative categories. Nisbett et al, when they scored the data from their study of college males' choice of girlfriend and major subject, categorized the data into entity or dispositional reasons. Entity reasons were all those which did not include any information about the chooser. Dispositional reasons were those which included a dispositional property of the actor even if they also included information about the girlfriend - for example 'We can relax

together'. These two categories therefore do not correspond directly with the extremes on the Gould and Sigall bipolar scale, since their dispositional category includes information which would come into the Gould and Sigall situational factors category.

McArthur's classification is different again. Her subjects were asked to choose one of four possible causes for each event: these were (a) 'Something about the person probably caused him to make response X to stimulus X'; (b) something about stimulus X probably caused the person to make response X to it.'; (c) Something about the particular circumstances probably caused the person to make response X to stimulus X'; (d) 'Some combination of a, b and c above probably caused the person to make response X to stimulus X'. The majority of subjects who chose (d) said the joint cause was the person and the stimulus combined. Unlike Gould and Sigall and Nisbett et al McArthur has divided the circumstances and the stimulus (which may or may not be another person) into separate categories. Categorization differences may be the reason some attribution theory studies give contradictory results.

Another methodological problem is the lack of detail in the descriptions of situations given to subjects. In real life, particularly when making attributions about themselves or people they know well, individuals are likely to be using a great deal more information than what is available to experimental subjects. McArthur's sentences for example, give us no details about the age or social background of the 'hero' of the sentences, yet this may be very important information. A common complaint of young people in inner-city areas is that the police pick on them

for no reason; for the policeman the fact of their age alone means that they are more likely to be doing something wrong. In a court of law it is normal practice for the judge to take the social background of the criminal into account before passing sentence. In real life many attributions observers make must be about people well known to them where background information is available. This information may be used unconsciously by the observer

n McArthur's experiment, for example, all her subjects were students they may well have assumed the 'hero' of her stories were people similar to themselves. If they were told that the John who laughed at the comedian was a tramp, would they have made different attributions? McArthur's data also fails to take the relative importance of the situation into account. 'George translates one sentence incorrectly 'has different consequences in different situations, and knowledge of these may influence the attribution process. In another sentence, 'Bill thinks his teacher is unfair,' is the behaviour of the teacher going to lead to Bill failing a course or getting a bad job reference, or has he merely been accused of some minor misdemeanour in class which was actually due to someone else? It is possible that different attributions would be made in these different situations. There is some evidence from attribution of responsibility studies that the more serious the consequences the more the individual is held responsible for what happened.

Furnham et al. (1983) asked 80 subjects to make attributions about events in some written scenarios, but they also asked their subjects to indicate what extra information they would like to enable them to be more confident in their judgments. They were asked for almost 800 extra pieces of information. This strongly suggests that subjects in attribution theory experiments are themselves aware of the deficiencies in the data they are given. Too many of the experiments conducted to investigate attribution theory use contrived situations and expect subjects to make attributions on the basis of extremely limited information. The experimenter chooses the classes of information to give his subjects, and he also chooses the categories the subject has to use to describe the way he has processed the data. It is not therefore surprising if on the whole the experimenters hypotheses are proved.

Farr and Anderson (1983) also complain that too much emphasis in attribution theory studies is placed on literary vignettes, this not only means subjects have limited information available to them, it also means there is no interaction between "actor" and "observer". They point out that in a real life interaction, individuals have to be both; they are simultaneously participating in the situation (ie. "acting") and observing other participants. This is likely to mean that in many social situations attribution forming is likely to be an active and interactive process rather than the fixed process measured in attribution experiments. Eiser (1978) suggests that another consequence of present methods of studying attributions is that the consequences of those attributions are not taken into account enough. We therefore do not know enough about how attributions lead to behaviour. If behaviour leads to attributions and these attributions then lead on to more behaviour, then that behaviour will give rise to more or

different attributions. It is therefore likely that in real life the attribution process is continuous and not fixed and immutable. Just as the scientist changes his hypotheses in the light of his research findings, so does the individual modify his attributions in the light of his own or other peoples' behaviour. Take, for example, the woman considered earlier whose husband is having an affair; the attributions she makes about his behaviour may influence her behaviour. If she sees the cause in his work environment she may urge him to change his job. If she sees the problem as her fault she may try to be sexier. If she sees it in terms of a male attitude she may feel she ought to pretend she doesn't know and hope it will soon end. These behavioural strategies are not necessarily mutually exclusive; she may urge her husband to change his job and try to be sexier, for example. Her husband's response to her attempts to influence the situation may then cause her to rethink the attributions she has made. It is also possible that she changes her behaviour as a response to her husband's affair before she has made any conscious attributions, and her attributions are made as a result of that behaviour change. Another complicating factor in real life situations is that there may not be agreement as to what the situation is that requires an explanation. The woman whose husband is having an affair may feel she can tolerate the affair, but the problem which requires satisfactory explanation may be that in order to have the affair, her husband has lied to her and deceived her.

Semin (1980) points out that attribution theorists do not take the broader social and cultural contexts of an act into account enough. For example, the attributions made by a football fan when describing a football match are likely to be different from the attributions made by someone from another culture who knew nothing of competitive team games and had never been to a football match.

Even within the same cultural group there are subcultures that view the world differently and will therefore make different attributions. For example, if a teenager is convicted of theft, the police are likely to explain the teenager's actions in terms of his personality. His probation officer might explain his actions by referring to his poor home background and his parents might attribute his crime to the bad company he keeps.

An important feature of the social context is the role the actor is playing in that situation. Kerber and Singleton (1984) conducted a study which suggested that when the attributor sees the actor performing a particular role in a high proportion of their encounters, such as student supervisor, then role induced characteristics are assumed to be enduring personality dispositions. Social context and roles may be an important part of the attribution process during marriage. Each partner takes into the marriage expectations of appropriate behaviour for husbands and wives based on what they have seen of their parents' marriage and other marriages within their community, and what they have learnt to expect from the norms of their community. Their peer group may also have their own norms to describe a happy marriage. It is possible therefore for conflict to arise, not only because each partner is bringing different attitudes and norms into the marriage, but because each individual may not realise that their own norms are contradictory. The wife may have learnt for example from her parents that it is normal for a family to move if the husband changes his job. Her peer group on the other hand may believe in equal decision making within marriage including the right to veto job changes which involve moving house. Even if the partners have talked extensively about their ideas of a good marriage and feel that they are in agreement, putting the ideas into practice may cause problems.

They may both agree that they believe marriage is a relationship of equals they may even agree that a consequence of this belief is that household chores should be shared equally. In practice, what does this mean? Is cooking a meal equivalent to washing up after it, for example? If so, should one person cook and the other wash up or should they each cook and wash up on alternate days? She may come from a family where dad always did the washing up. He may come from a family where mum always did the washing up. So they may each feel the washing up should be done by the other. They may be able to talk about this and reach a solution that suits them both, but one of them may just feel angry and resentful, and their partner may not understand why. Marriage actually changes the roles of the two people concerned. Before marriage their roles are boy friend and girl friend or fiancé., and the expectations of these roles are quite different from the expectations of husbands and wives. It is possible to perform well in one role and not the other, yet choice of marriage partner is inevitably based on whether the prospective husband or wife performs well in the role of boyfriend or girl friend. Marriage can change not only behaviour but expectations of behaviour. It seems therefore that what is missing from the supporting evidence for the attribution theories is real world data, from situations that are important in peoples lives. Some attempts have been made to apply attribution theory to the psychotherapeutic relationship, and to the marital relationship, however, and these are reviewed below.

Attribution Theory and Psychotherapy

If behaviour and attributions are linked then if a person with a behavioural problem can change his attributions about that problem then he may be able to change his behaviour.

The problem may also have arisen in the first place as a consequence of an attribution.

Valins and Nisbett (1971) suggest that one of the causes of certain emotional disorders could be faulty attributions. People usually evaluate their own behaviour by social comparisons, but if the piece of behaviour in question is something the individual is ashamed of or thinks of as bad in some way he is unlikely to seek the information which might reassure him. In the absence of adequate social comparisons he may well develop dispositional explanations for his behaviour. Valins and Nisbett suggest that the role of a therapist could be to help the individual reattribute his problems to situational factors. A man who sometimes has problems obtaining an erection may well believe he is the only man with this problem and that it proves he is not properly masculine. He is unlikely to discuss it with his friends because he will feel they are only going to confirm that he is right about himself. If he takes this problem to a therapist or counsellor, the counsellor may be able to point out to him that the problem seems to occur at times when he is under stress at work and the cause is probably either tiredness or anxiety. He will be able to reassure his client that it is normal to find it difficult to obtain an erection in these circumstances. The therapist has then substituted a situational attribution for a dispositional one and he has at the same time assured his client that he not alone - other men have this problem too in a similar situation.

This is an interesting use of attribution theory since it is actually suggesting that people with emotional problems make attributions differently from "normal" people. Kelley's theory says actors tend to attribute their own behaviour to situational factors not dispositional factors. If the shameful behaviour is considered to be a form of failure then Weiner's theory would also predict that the individual would seek situational explanations for his behaviour. Alternatively perhaps Kelley's and Weiner's predictions are a result of conducting laboratory experiments on a rather limited range of situations. There are possibly some situations where it is more likely that the individual will attribute responsibility to himself even when the causes are likely to be situational. The parents of a child involved in a road accident may well feel responsible, for example, even though they were not present at the time. They may feel that the fact that the accident happened shows that they were negligent in some way. This is likely to arise from cultural conditioning that parents are responsible for what their children do. This again supports Semin's view that attribution theory does not take cultural context sufficiently into account. Attribution theory also may not take personality differences sufficiently into account. A man who has no doubts about his masculinity may seek situational explanations for his difficulty if he finds it hard to achieve an erection. This means unless a similar situation arises again he should have problems in the future. If however the man is rather unsure of himself and doubts his masculinity he may see his erectile problem as proof of his already existing doubts and make dispositional attributions which ensure the problem continues in the future.

Ross, Rodin and Zinbardo (1969) carried out an experiment which they feel is a laboratory analogue to the use of an attribution therapy. Their subjects were made to listen to a very loud noise, half of them were given a list of possible side effects of the noise which were in fact reactions which could also indicate fear, the other half were given a different list of possible side effects which were unconnected with common fear reactions. The subjects were then given two puzzles to solve one leading to a reward and failure to complete the other leading to a shock. They found subjects who could attribute fear symptoms to the noise spent significantly more time on the reward problem, subjects who could not, spent significantly more time on the shock avoidance puzzle. These subjects also reported more fear on a questionnaire than the noise attribution subjects. Ross et al consider that this is evidence that altering someone's attributions does in fact influence their behaviour. In other words if a therapist can help her client revise the attributions she is making about the situation she is in this may enable her to change her behaviour.

Fincham (1983) suggests that in real life since there are usually several plausible causes for an event, it is not surprising if the partners in a relationship do not always agree about those causes. He suggests that a therapist needs to help her client revise her estimates of how plausible different attributions for an event are, rather than attempting to find a single "true" cause.

Miller and Norman (1979) have suggested that attribution theory is relevant to Seligman's (1972) learned helplessness theory of depression, and that attribution theory can actually be used to improve Seligman's theory.

Seligman suggests that people get depressed as a result of repeatedly finding themselves in a situation or situations over which they perceive themselves to have little or no control, i.e. they learn that they are helpless. Miller and Norman suggest Seligman's theory is inadequate because it does not take cognition sufficiently into account. They suggest that attributions to internal, important stable and general causes increases the severity and generalization of learnt helplessness. Attributions to external, unimportant, variable and specific causes minimises the severity and generalization of learnt helplessness. This implies that people suffering from this form of depression can be helped by helping them modify their attributions. For example a woman who is depressed because her husband is showing her less affection, may attribute this to the fact that he doesn't love her any more, an important stable, general cause which could also be internal (she probably thinks she must have done something to cause him to lose his love). This woman may feel better if she can attribute his behaviour to stress because he is going through a difficult patch at work. This is an external specific cause which is also hopefully variable (work conditions can improve).

There is some empirical evidence that depressed people do have a different attributional style to non depressed people (Abramson and Martin (1981)). When compared to non depressed college students depressed students attributed negative outcomes to internal stable and global factors and positive outcomes to external unstable factors. These papers are mainly ideas papers backed up with laboratory studies there has not been much direct use of

attribution theory ideas in psychotherapy. There do not appear to be any studies examining the use of an attribution therapy approach or even studies of therapy sessions looking at whether clients do make attributions and whether the therapist attempts to modify them. If helping clients change their attributions about major events in their lives is an important part of the counselling process it should be possible to examine transcripts of sessions of clients and therapists of any theoretical persuasion and find evidence that this is happening. The therapists may not be consciously aware that this is one of the processes going on within counselling. In fact when therapists reformulate their clients' problems in terms of their own theoretical perspective it could be argued that giving that interpretation to the client is attempting to alter the client's attribution process.

Attribution Theory and the Marital Relationship

Newman (1981) has suggested that whilst Kelley's dispositional/situational split for attributions may be sufficient when interactions of strangers are considered it may not be adequate when the individuals interacting are well known to each other; perhaps a new category of interpersonal attributions is required. She also suggests that in an ongoing relationship some attributions may be implicit in an interpretation of a piece of behaviour rather than the result of a thought out analysis of that behaviour. For example the statement 'you are angry with me' may be made as a result of one person using a particular tone of voice to the other. In other words the behaviour (tone of voice) lead to the attribution of an emotion.

This can lead to problems when attempting to classify attributions from people's accounts of what is happening.

In an experimental context the subject is asked to pick an explanation for a particular piece of behaviour and one explanation might be "person X is angry with person Y". If this explanation is chosen it is clear it is being used as an attribution. However, if a client in a marital counselling session says "my husband is angry with me" she may be saying many different things. She may mean "I know from his tone of voice that my husband is angry with me", but she is unlikely to say this explicitly as she will assume her therapist knows what she means by angry behaviour. She may be using the statement as a conclusion or a prelude to descriptions of her own behaviour which she believes might have caused her husband's anger, i.e. she is attributing his anger (the effect) to her behaviour (the cause) although she may never make the link explicit. Or she may precede or follow her statement with descriptions of things her husband does once he is angry, i.e. she is attributing actions of his (the effect) to his anger (the cause); again she may not make this link explicit. Alternatively her statement may have a mixture of all or some of these meanings - "I deduce that my husband is angry from his tone of voice, this anger is a result of me failing to tidy away the children's toys, as a result of his anger he will refuse to do the washing up after dinner". The researcher and the therapist will both have to judge what the client is trying to say in her simple statement "My husband is angry with me". If the client is attributing her husband's anger to a cause she may be open to looking at alternative explanations; if however she is seeing her husband's anger as the cause of something else, explanation about causes of the anger may have no meaning for her. Causal statements

are complex because the client may see the cause she gives as having no origins - i.e. it is like an immutable fact - or she may be using statements simultaneously as cause and effect, as in the mixed meaning statement above where the husband's anger is both cause and effect. This anger could be traced even further back if the wife gives reasons why she did not tidy the children's toys away. Sooner or later, however, the client will reach an ultimate cause beyond which she will not go because she sees it as an unarguable fact. The point at which the client stops in her explanations and questions no further will vary from client to client, and from situation to situation. A client may produce a lengthy cause and effect chain for some situations and a very short one for others.

Hall and Taylor (1976) suggested that each partner in marriage tends to idealise the other and they suggested that this idealisation is maintained through a pattern of biased causal attributions. They hypothesised that each partner attributes his or her spouse's good behaviour to personal qualities of the spouse, and bad behaviour to situational factors. This is similar to Weiner's finding that people attribute their successes to internal causes and their failures to external causes. Hall and Taylor tested their hypothesis by giving a questionnaire containing 24 items, using three examples of socially desirable behaviour and three of socially undesirable behaviour; each item was paired with one of four people, an acquaintance, a friend, the self and the spouse. A sample statement is "Your spouse is having a heated argument with another person". The statements therefore were not about real incidents within the marriage nor was any back-

ground information supplied to the subjects. They found that their results supported their hypothesis. They gave the same questionnaire to the same subjects a week later after first asking them some open ended questions about their marriage; for half the subjects the questions were about a recent unpleasant incident and for the other half about a recent pleasant incident. This manipulation made no difference to their results. This is perhaps not surprising since the questionnaire is not about the spouses' behaviours to each other but towards another unknown person. Whatever the subject has been talking about before filling in the questionnaire, he is likely to draw on his long term knowledge of his partner to answer these generalised questions; for example when considering the statement, "Your spouse is having a heated argument with another person" he is likely to think to himself "Is my partner the type of person who gets into heated arguments with others?" If his answer is yes then he will make a personality attribution, if it is no then he will make a situational attribution. Perhaps one reason people make situational attributions in response to this type of question is that a personality attribution reflects badly not only on their partner (she is an argumentative type) but also on their own ability to make a good choice of partner (they have married someone or are remaining with someone knowing them to be argumentative).

Kelley (1979) has applied his version of attribution theory to a study of close personal relationships. He sees a close relationship between two people as an interdependence, each person's behaviour provides the stimulus for the others response. He is particularly interested in the marital

relationship. In an interview study of 100 heterosexual couples he elicited 400 problems that they had encountered in their relationship, which he was able to cluster into 15 categories. He and his co-workers discovered that it was quite difficult to persuade subjects to be specific; over 40% of the problems were expressed in non specific terms referring to personal traits and attitudes. He also found that negative behaviour is given a different interpretation by the actor and the observer. 'Actors more often than their partners explain their negative behaviour by their concern for the partner and by their consideration of the pair's mutual benefit. In contrast partners more often explain negative behaviour as being caused by lack of concern for the partner.'

The fact that Kelley had difficulty persuading his subjects to be specific suggests that when making attributions in the context of a long term relationship incidents are not seen in isolation but are put into the context of previous incidents to provide supporting evidence for the existence of particular attitudes or personality traits in the other person. This strategy would not show up in the attempts to verify attribution theory in the laboratory, not only because laboratory experiments do not usually study attributions made when actor and observer know each other well but also because they focus on the explanations for a specific incident only. Perhaps situational attributions are much rarer than dispositional ones in long term relationships. Dispositional attributions have the advantage of being a useful shorthand way of talking about the relationship. If a woman says 'my husband is very selfish' her listener can conjure up a picture in her mind not only of

what the husband is like as a person, but what sort of things he might be doing in the relationship with his wife which lead her to describe her husband in this way. The listener's picture in her mind is drawn from her own knowledge of expected behaviour of husbands in that society and of what sort of behaviours are normally described as selfish in the context of the marital relationship. This picture will have a certain degree of accuracy even when the listener hardly knows the wife and she doesn't know the husband at all.

In the context of a relationship which the couple consider on the whole to be satisfactory, the description of problems in terms of personality characteristics could be meant to signify an acceptance of the negative aspects of the relationship. To describe someone with a personality characteristic in the absence of information to the contrary is to imply that he has always been like that and always will be like that; in other words the problems that gave rise to the description are likely to be there in the foreseeable future.

Orvis et al 1976 asked couples to, list independently examples of their own and their partners behaviour for which they have each given different explanations, listing their versions of the two explanations. They found that on average 8.4 examples were given and the overlap of examples between partners was low. Orvis et al suggest this is because each partner is sampling from a large population of examples, implying that attributional conflict is common within a close relationship such as marriage. They found that women gave more examples of their own behaviour than their partner's, and men gave more examples of their partner's behaviour than their own. It is possible that this reflects

a cultural tendency to believe it is the wife's responsibility to adapt to her husband's behaviour and not vice versa.

The advantage of this type of research is that the couples are asked to give examples of explanations for behaviour and so there can be no doubt for the researcher that a particular statement is an explanation or considered to be one by the person giving it. The difficulty is that this research requires intelligent literate subjects (all of them were college students). Also if the behaviours over which each partner makes different attributions do come from a large set of possible behaviours, perhaps having to write them down influences which type of behaviours are chosen as examples. Since it takes longer to write something than to say it, it perhaps also influences the number of examples given.

Harvey, Wells and Alvarez (1978) conducted a questionnaire study of 36 unmarried couples who spent at least 4 nights a week together over at least 6 months but who reported conflict within the relationship. Each individual rated the extent to which certain factors were the causes of conflict in their eyes and also what they believed would be their partner's answers. There was considerable agreement between the partners on the importance of various conflict areas but the men rated incompatibility in sexual relations as ^amore important source of conflict than the women; they also overestimated the importance of this factor to the women. The women on the other hand underestimated the importance of sexual incompatibility to the men. The other factor which was more important to the men than the women was the influence of important events. The women

attributed more importance to financial problems and the stresses associated with work or education. A further study involving 8 women and 2 men reported their feelings about a marital separation; the data was collected by tape recording a structured interview. All but one of the subjects reported a romantic involvement by their spouse outside the marriage as a factor in the break-up. Eight of the subjects perceived their partners as insensitive and lacking in warmth and affection. Both men and five women felt their partners were less thrifty and did not pay enough attention to personal cleanliness and physical fitness. Four women and one man saw their partners' reduced religious commitment as a factor in the separation. Three women felt alcohol consumption and associated violence from their partners was a major cause in the break-up. This data suggests that in many cases there is no single cause for the break-up of a relationship. Some of these women had husbands who were involved with another woman and were being violent towards them after getting drunk. As the sample is so small it is, of course, difficult to say how typical the problems are. It may be that only people who have good reasons to feel they have been wronged volunteer to take part in this sort of research. The authors suggest that the data from their study is consistent with the idea that in-depth attribution analysis lags behind critical behaviour as conflicts escalate towards separation. They also feel the attributions are very different in their nature from the bland emotionless attributions made in laboratory studies. More speculatively they suggest that their data might indicate that men brought up in a very stereotypically masculine way have in effect been trained

to hold incorrect attributions about their roles in close relationships and may not have developed enough skill to analyse and understand the dynamics of these relationships. If correct this suggests that attribution theory has a vital role to play in marital therapy, that therapists need to help their male clients modify their attribution process. It is also suggesting that the ability to make "correct" attributions is a learnt skill which some people do not have. There does not seem to be anything in the theoretical literature at the moment to suggest that some people are unable to make attributions in circumstances where other people could.

Fincham and Bradbury (1987) investigated the relationships between attributions about marital events and marital satisfaction of both partners in 34 couples. They measured both attributions and marital satisfaction twice, twelve months apart. Seven of the 34 couples had been seeking marital therapy at the time of the study; the others had replied to an advert in a local paper asking for couples to take part in a study of marriage. They found a correlation between marital satisfaction and attributions, for both men and women on both occasions; in other words the poorer the marital satisfaction rating the more likely it was that the individual was attributing cause or responsibility for marital dissatisfactions to their partner. They also found for women (but not men) that there was a correlation between attributions on the first occasion and marital satisfaction on the second. However, there was no correlation between marital satisfaction at the first test and attributions at the second test. They suggest this indicates that attributions influence marital satisfaction rather than marital satisfaction influencing attributions.

Newman and Langer (1981) studied the attributions about their marital breakdown made by 66 divorced women. They categorized the attributions

subjects made into interactive attributions defined as 'those explanations which point to features of the dyadic unit itself, which have been jointly established' and person attributions defined as 'those explanations which point primarily to characteristics of either self or spouse'. They found that although many person attributions were given in every case they referred to characteristics of the spouse such as emotional immaturity, psychological problems, irrational behaviour, selfishness and excessive gambling or drinking. The predominant attributions claimed as interactive were incompatibility, changing life styles or values, lack of closeness or love, lack of communication and money problems. They found that the women who made interactive attributions for their divorce consistently had a higher opinion of themselves than the women who blamed the divorce on their spouses personal characteristics. They were also more active and considered themselves more socially skilled. It is of course not possible to say whether interactive explanations for divorce lead to better acceptance of what has happened or whether more self confident people are more likely to make interactive attributions. It might be the case for example that women lacking in self esteem married men who were not much good because they felt they would not get anyone better. These women would then explain their marital failure in terms of their husband's personality characteristics.

Summary

It seems that attribution theory could be useful for analysing the explanations clients give for their marital problems, and any alternative explanations offered by the counsellor. Some aspects of attributed theory have been well tested in the laboratory, although there are limitations to applying their results to real world data. It is possible that the different attribution theories are not really incompatible, and that people either make a wider range of attributions

about an event in real life than they are given the opportunity to in the laboratory, or the different categories of attributions are used to explain different events.

Attribution theory has also been applied to psychotherapy and used to investigate marital relationships. It is therefore known that partners make attributions to explain at least some aspects of their marital relationship. It is also known that husbands and wives do not always agree about the attributions for a particular event.

The next chapter considers the theoretical and practical objectives the researcher had in mind when she started to analyse the transcripts of counselling sessions. The chapter then goes on to describe in detail how the preliminary analysis was carried out and the problems encountered.

CHAPTER 6

HYPOTHESES

The previous chapter outlined attribution theory and some of the experimental work based on the theory, and the methodological problems associated with investigating the theory in a laboratory setting. The chapter also outlined how attribution theory has been applied to psychotherapy and marital relationships. This chapter outlines how attribution theory will be applied in the analysis of the transcripts of marriage guidance counselling sessions, which is laid out in the next three chapters, and some hypotheses which can be derived from the theory and tested in a preliminary way on these data. It also outlines some of the methodological problems which might arise when attempting to test the hypotheses. The next chapter will cover the methodological problems in detail and how they were dealt with.

The first hypothesis is that clients will make attributions of responsibility for their marital problems to the counsellor in a counselling session. Newman and Langer (1981) illustrates the use of attributions in the context of marital breakdown. Similarly Harvey Wells and Alvarez (1978) found that couples experiencing conflict in their relationship made attributions about that conflict. The common feature of all clients coming for marital counselling is that they are dissatisfied with at least some aspects of their relationship. These findings support the common sense view that clients in counselling sessions will make attributions. In previous studies the subjects have been asked explicitly to make attributions. In this study they will not be asked explicitly for attributions; the transcripts are of actual sessions whose purpose was marriage guidance

rather than research, however it is implicit in the client counsellor relationship that the client explains to the counsellor why she has come for counselling and what she feels is wrong with the marriage. Clients should therefore make attributions. Since the therapist is not asking directly for attributions, methodological problems are created which do not arise when a researcher asks explicitly for them - particularly the problem of how precisely to identify a section of transcript as an attribution in an inter-subjectively reliable way. This identification has to be made using a formal definition of an attribution. Researchers who ask for attributions or who develop lists of statements they consider to be attributions to use in their research can avoid making a formal definition. As explained in the previous chapter, there is at the moment no adequate formal definition of an attribution which could be used in this research. The researcher therefore had to develop a definition and decide how to use it in the analysis of the contents of the counselling session. Exactly how these methodological problems were tackled is described and discussed in the next chapter.

The next hypothesis^{is} that the counsellor will make attributions during the counselling process. This hypothesis is more speculative than the first since there have been no attribution based studies of counsellors' or therapists' roles in therapy. Rogerian techniques would indeed suggest in theory that the counsellor would introduce little in the way of new "accounts", but rather would support and encourage the clients' own accounts. However, the reality of the counselling situation is that the client has real problems and is seeking positive help in finding real solutions. Therefore it is possible that one way the counsellor provides this help is by suggesting alternative explanations for the clients' problems to the ones the client has found for herself.

Even if the counselling is totally Rogerian and the counsellor simply reflects back to the client what she has said, the counsellor is likely to be selective in this reflection, in effect reinforcing some explanations rather than others. Ross Rodin and Zimbardo's (1969) study, which was a laboratory analogue of therapy, showed that what subjects are told can have a major influence on their perceptions of their situation. Valins and Nisbett (1971) also suggest that part of a successful therapeutic encounter is that the therapist helps the client to alter his perception of his situation to a more constructive perception. In other words the therapist is actually helping the client change his attributions by suggesting more satisfactory alternatives. It therefore seems probable that counsellors do make attributions.

If Valins and Nisbett are correct, successful therapy involves an interaction between clients' attributions and therapists' attributions. The client offers her explanation for her problems and the therapist offers some alternatives. These may be accepted as they are or the client may in effect negotiate with his therapist to arrive at some mutually acceptable alternatives. It is therefore worthwhile not just looking at client and counsellor attributions in isolation, but also looking at the interaction between them, particularly at how the therapist's attributions are received by the client. It is possible that when a client does not return after a first counselling session it is partly because the therapist has not suggested attributions she finds acceptable and they have not been able to negotiate a mutually agreeable set of attributions. Therefore a further hypothesis is that there will be a difference between the attribution interactions of a client and counsellor in a first counselling session of clients who continue in counselling and those who do not.

Since there is a lack of previous research on which to base this hypothesis it is not possible to be more precise.

When considering clients' attributions there is research evidence to suggest that it is possible to subcategorise attributions into situational and dispositional, but researchers who have used these subcategories have tended to act as if they are the only possibilities - all attributions are either one or the other, (Jones and Nisbett 1971, Regan and Totter 1975, Gould and Sigall 1977). However these researchers were dealing with limited situations, which had been set up to investigate these two variables. Therefore when more complex situations are considered more categories of attributions might be necessary. Although other subcategories of attribution have not been investigated experimentally, researchers have suggested the possibility that they exist. Nisbett and Valins (1971) suggest that it is useful to create a category of attitude attributions. Jones and Davis (1965) have suggested that motivation is also a useful category of attributions. Both of these possibilities seem particularly relevant to clients' attempts to explain their marital problems. They commonly talk about their own attitudes and motives and how these influence their behaviour; they also attempt to deduce their partner's attitudes and motives from their partner's behaviour. Semin (1980) suggests that attribution theorists should take a subject's social and cultural background into account since this influences his expectations in any particular situation. This is also likely to be relevant to the explanations that clients give for their marital problems. Clients sometimes feel that their partner has not lived up to their expectations of how a marital partner should behave. Since there are no longer any universal norms for correct behaviour within a marriage, it also happens sometimes that conflict is created between partners because they each have different expectations.

In a marital counselling session where the client is free to say what she wants about a very complex situation, it is probable that all of these possible categories, situation, personality, motivation, attitude and expectation will be useful for classifying her attributions. However, since no adequate definitions exist for any attribution subcategories not even situational and dispositional, the formal hypothesis can only be that clients' attributions can usefully be subclassified into a number of categories and the purpose is to explore possible categories for their utility. Subcategorising the attributions involves considerable methodological problems, since adequate definitions of each category have to be developed, and the reliability of the subsequent analysis has to be assessed. The methodological problems and the analysis are discussed in more detail in chapter 8.

Jones and Nisbett were able to propose and test a specific hypothesis about situational and dispositional attributions, which was that "there is a pervasive tendency for actors to attribute their actions to situational requirements where as observers tend to attribute the same actions to stable personal dispositions". If this hypothesis is relevant to a client discussing her marital problems, it could be argued that she is the actor when talking about her own behaviour and the observer when talking about her partner's. The hypothesis could therefore be revised to state that in a marital counselling session a client will make more situational than dispositional attributions about her own behaviour and more dispositional than situational attributions about her partner's. Since there have been a number of laboratory experiments which have supported the Jones and Nisbett hypothesis, it is worth investigating it in this context. However there are a number of reasons why; in this context, the situation may be more complicated. Firstly, researchers investigating

the Jones and Nisbett hypothesis have used contrived situations where the situational and dispositional factors have been emphasised; this is not the case when a client is talking about her marital problems. It may be that situational and dispositional are minority categories and other categories are used more often. In general, laboratory experiments involve the interaction of people who are strangers to each other; in a marital interaction this is certainly not the case. It may be that an observer makes dispositional attributions when he does not know much about the actor. When the actor is well known to the observer the observer may make more situational attributions because he has a much greater knowledge of the actor's life situations.

Because attribution theory has not been used before to analyse the contents of counselling sessions, it is difficult to raise many specific hypotheses for testing. The major point of this study is to explore the usefulness of attribution theory as a framework for analysing the counselling process. However the process of analysing the data collected may itself yield useful information for both the attribution theorist and the counselling practitioner. There may be differences in attribution style for different groups of clients, the counsellor may make more attributions to certain types of client. There may be large variations in the proportions of clients self and partner attributions and this may be related to the nature of the client's problem. For example, a client whose partner is having an affair may attribute responsibility for that to her partner and hence make more partner than self attributions. However, it is also possible to argue the opposite, that she might attribute responsibility to herself. She has greater powers to change herself than her partner and this may enable her to be more optimistic about her chances of persuading him to give up his girlfriend and stay with her. Since

there is no previous research on which to base further hypotheses, it is better to see what emerges from the data, this may make it possible to formulate new hypotheses which could be tested by further research.

The hypotheses investigated in this reasearch therefore are the following.

- a) Clients will make attributions about their marital problems to the counsellor in a counselling session.
- b) Counsellors will make attributions about the client's marital problems to the client in a counselling session.
- c) There will be a difference between the attribution interaction of client and counsellor in a first counselling session of clients who continue in counselling compared with those who do not.
- d) Clients attributions can be subclassified into a number of categories. Two of these categories are likely to be situational and dispositional, other possibilities are attitude, motivation and expectation.
- e) In a marital counselling session a client will make more situational than dispositional attributions about her own behaviour and more dispositional than situational about her partner's.

Since attribution theory has not been used to analyse counselling sessions before, these hypotheses are intended to be a structural framework for findings and ideas to develop rather than a straight jacket to restrict analysis. It is hoped other findings will emerge which can be used to develop new hypotheses for testing.

These hypotheses may be tested on a larger client sample or perhaps it may be possible to develop more sophisticated and yet still well controlled experimental designs for testing hypotheses.

METHODOLOGY AND PRELIMINARY TRANSCRIPT ANALYSIS

Introduction

The previous chapter described the hypotheses to be tested in this research and indicated some of the methodological problems likely to arise when carrying out the analysis. This chapter describes the preliminary stages of that analysis and the methodological problems encountered. The preliminary stage involved the collection and identification of attributions of responsibility for or cause of the marital difficulties. The identified attributions were also divided into self or partner or joint attributions depending on who the client was making the attribution about. A self attribution was one in which the client was taking responsibility for that aspect of the marital problem. A partner attribution was one in which the client was attributing responsibility to her partner. A joint attribution was one where the client was suggesting responsibility was shared with her partner. Since clients occasionally attribute responsibility for their problems to other members of the family such as parents or children or partner's lover, a final category was called miscellaneous for all of the attributions about other people's influence on the relationship.

The second stage of the analysis which was the subcategorisation of self and partner attributions into types of attribution such as personality and situation is discussed in the next chapter.

The procedures adopted to carry out the analysis are described and the practical and methodological problems discussed, together with

the theoretical implications of the analysis. Chapter 9 considers the final stage of the analysis, which was examining the interaction of the client and counsellor's attributions and the implications this interaction might have for counselling practice.

This chapter describes the stages of the preliminary analysis in the order in which they were carried out. This approach has been adopted because some of the problems encountered during the analysis had not been predicted in advance, and each time a solution is adopted for a particular problem the solution can itself create other problems which then have to be tackled. The objectives of this preliminary analysis were to investigate the first two hypotheses described in the previous chapter, that both client and counsellor would make attributions about the client's marital problems in a counselling session.

Finding Attributions

There are several options for finding attributions, each with advantages and disadvantages. Clients could be provided with a questionnaire with many different options to accept or reject. The advantage of this is that it is quite clear that every statement accepted by the client is an attribution. However, this approach would mean that the actual content of the counselling session is being ignored, and it would be impossible to study client counsellor interaction. This method of collecting attributions was therefore not seriously considered.

A better alternative since it allows the client more freedom would be to ask clients to give all the explanations for their problems of which they can think. This could be done in writing or orally. A written list of explanations was rejected because it is intimidating to have those clients who are not very confident about expressing

themselves in writing. Also it does not enable the interaction of clients and counsellors attributions to be studied. Verbal collection is better since the clients are likely to say more and be less inhibited about expressing themselves. As with a questionnaire this method has the advantage that it is known that everything the clients say they consider to be attributions since that is what they have been asked for. However, it also ignores the interaction of client and counsellor, not only the counsellor's possible role as a provider of alternative attributions, but also her role as an enabler to help the client clarify her own ideas and express thoughts she has not yet been able to put into words.

The method chosen to collect the data was simply to record what happened during the counselling session. This has the advantage that not only are the clients free to give explanations in any form they want, but counsellors attributions (if any) can also be recorded and the interaction between the client and the counsellor can be analysed. The counsellor may influence the client's attributions by encouraging or discouraging some of the client's own attributions rather than supplying completely new attributions. Since this is essentially a passive data collecting method it may make counsellors feel more comfortable about agreeing to collect data as their clients are not being actively interfered with. However, there is one major disadvantage with this method; since the client is never formally asked whether she is making an attribution, someone has to decide whether a particular statement is or is not an attribution. As explained in chapter 5, there is at the moment no universally accepted definition of what an attribution is, and no definition that is in a suitable form to use reliably for the identification of attributions from free speech.

It was felt that the advantages of this method of data collection outweighed the disadvantages. How an attribution was defined will be explained in a later section.

Data Collection

There are several possible methods of recording a counselling session, such as tape recording, video recording or shorthand. Shorthand was not considered for practical reasons; it would require a skilled shorthand writer to be available within earshot of the counselling (if not actually in the room) whenever a counselling session took place. Video recordings provide more information than tape recordings, but they are more intrusive and clients are less likely to forget they are being recorded. Since the extra information is visual rather than verbal it was felt that it was not necessary to collect visual information to analyse verbal content, and so tape recording was chosen as the method of data collection.

The tape recordings were transcribed for ease of handling, this means that possible cues such as tone of voice are missing, which can lead to misinterpretation of what has been said. However, the alternative is to keep winding a tape backwards and forwards to find the attributions and then writing them down. This is rather cumbersome and must inevitably lead to the temptation to leave out possible attribution statements to save time. It is also harder to see where attributions chosen by different raters are actually slightly different portions of the same piece of text.

It was intended that tapes would be collected from a number of different counsellors. If data from only one counsellor is used there is always a danger that anything that is discovered during analysis is somehow simply a result of that particular counsellor's

style of working and would not generalise to other counsellors. This is particularly true if the counsellor is also the researcher. It would be argued that in some way she ensures that attributions are made by her clients and that other counsellors' clients would not make them. Unfortunately, counsellors are not accustomed to tape recording their sessions. They are also trained to give paramount importance to confidentiality, and many of them felt that if they handed over a tape recording of their counselling session to someone else they would not be able to guarantee confidentiality. In the end only one other counsellor who was in the habit of tape recording her counselling sessions for her own benefit and was herself a post graduate student, agreed to pass on tapes. It was felt that in the circumstances the best use of her recordings was to consider them as "controls". She was not told anything about attribution theory or exactly what the researcher was looking for; she was simply told the researcher was interested in how the client explained his or her marital problems. If it was found that her clients made attributions, it would suggest the researcher is not somehow manipulating her clients to ensure they make attributions. If this counsellor makes attributions herself it would suggest the researcher is not just making attributions because she knows about attribution theory. It may be that the nature of the interaction of the clients' and counsellors' attributions is a product of a particular style of working by a counsellor, and only using two counsellors will not give a representative sample of these interactions. This is an important limitation from a theoretical viewpoint but from a practical viewpoint it is less important. If certain interactions are found to be beneficial in some way and others less beneficial, other counsellors can still learn useful lessons from this which they can apply to their own counselling even if their own styles are rather different.

In summary the decisions taken so far, for a mixture of methodological and practical reasons, have been to collect attributions from counselling sessions, to collect them by tape recording the sessions and analysing typed transcriptions of the tapes, to use primarily recordings from the researcher with a small number as "controls" from one other counsellor. This final decision being taken for unavoidable practical reasons.

Number of Sessions to Analyse

The next decision to take was how many sessions with a particular client to analyse and how many different clients to include in the sample. The simple answer to this is that the more sessions and the more clients included in the sample the better. However, it takes a considerable amount of time to transcribe and analyse a tape of a counselling session, so the numbers of sessions analysed has to be limited by practical time considerations. There is therefore a trade off between analysing several sessions of a small number of clients and analysing only one or two sessions of a larger number of clients. Analysing the changes in attributions from one session to the next would be very useful, it may be that certain types of attributional change have more beneficial effects than others.

However, very little analysis of attributions has been done when people are totally free to say what they want. It may be that there are considerable variations between people in the number and type of attributions they make. If a small number of clients is studied in depth between client variations will not be so apparent. Given the relative lack of knowledge of how people make attributions about real problems affecting their lives, it was felt it would be better to concentrate on first counselling sessions of as large a number of clients as possible, so that between-people variations could be

studied better. If for example only three or four clients are studied in depth and they only make a relatively small number of situational attributions it may be that is a peculiarity of these clients and not typical of people with marital problems in general. If more clients are studied and none of them make many situational attributions it can be more confidently stated that situational attributions in the context of descriptions of marital problems are less common than laboratory studies might suggest. A reasonable number of different clients also needs to be studied in order to test the final hypothesis in chapter 6 that a client will make more situational than dispositional attributions about her own behaviour and more dispositional than situational about her partner's. It was decided therefore that the client sample should contain a minimum of 10 first interviews with female clients. Female clients were chosen largely for the practical reason that they are the largest client group. From one counsellor the accumulation of ten new female clients would take nearly a year. Ten new male clients could take two years and ten couples three years. The subject population therefore consisted of ten female clients and all of the couples and male clients who became new clients while the female data was being collected. All sessions were taped, although only the first session tapes were analysed in detail.

Data Collection Procedure

There was no pre-selection of clients for suitability. I asked each client at the beginning of the first session if they would mind the tape recorder being switched on, and if they wanted an explanation (not all of them did). I explained briefly that the recordings were for a research project with the ultimate aim of improving counselling skills. They were also assured that the tapes would be kept confidential and they would not be identified to anyone else.

The clients were not told anything about attribution theory or told that I was interested in the explanations they gave for their marital problems. Once the decision was made to tape record, every client was asked, and if permission was given, every session was tape recorded. Only one female client coming on her own refused permission; she was disabled and concerned with her inability to form a relationship and so she was rather different from the majority of clients. No man coming alone refused permission for the tape recorder to be switched on, although a husband who came to a first session with his wife did refuse.

The final sample consisted of 10 female clients, 4 male clients and 2 couples.

Table 7.1 Number of Sessions Attended by Each Client

| Name | No. Sessions | Name | No. Sessions |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Mrs. A. | 30 | Mrs. F | 8 |
| Mrs. B | 2 | Mrs. G | 1 |
| Mrs. C | 3 | Mrs. H | 7 |
| Mrs. D | 1 | Mrs. I | 7 |
| Mrs. E | 1 | Mrs. J | 2 |
| Mr. K | 3 | Mr. M | 8 |
| Mr. L | 12 | Mr. N | 3 |
| Mr. & Mrs. O | 16 | Mr. & Mrs. P | 2 + |
| | | Mr. P 1 & | |
| | | Mrs. P 1 | |

Mrs. A's husband also came for counselling after she had been coming a few weeks. Unfortunately his voice was so soft it was almost inaudible and so his tapes could not be analysed.

Mr. F came with his wife to the second session and then came three

times on his own; however he refused to allow the tape recorder to be switched on.

Mrs. H brought her husband to one of the later sessions and that was tape recorded.

The four male clients always came alone.

The other counsellor provided two first interview tapes, the first of which is referred to as "Mr. & Mrs X" and the second as "Mrs Y".

Definition of an Attribution

Having decided what data to collect and how to collect it, the next methodological issue was how to define an attribution and to decide which statements in a transcript of a counselling session were attributions.

Since there is no universally accepted definition of what an attribution is that is in a suitable form to be used for analysing free speech, a definition had to be developed. Since attributions are essentially explanations it might be possible to define an attribution as any statement containing the word because, or any other word that is frequently used during explanation giving such as therefore. Preliminary examination of some transcripts suggested that this tactic wasn't likely to work. It was noticeable that although what the clients were saying usually was easily understandable, grammatically it did not come up to the standard that would be expected of a passage of written English. This paradoxically tended to be particularly the case with the better educated clients, largely because they attempted to use more complex sentence structures. Link words such as 'because' and 'therefore' were frequently missing. Sentences were not always completed, because the client changed direction mid sentence and went on to another topic, or because the topic was

distressing and she could not continue, or because she assumed the counsellor would know what she was talking about (this was particularly true of sexual matters).

A typical example of a possible attribution statement which did not include the word because is "I found that I didn't need him really you know (because) I'd become too independent". Although the client does not use the word because inserting it does not change the meaning of what she is saying. In fact clients often use phrases like "you know" as a substitute for the word because. However, it would not be satisfactory to say the presence of such a phrase means the statement is an attribution; clients often use phrases such as "you know" and "well you see" as fillers when they get stuck and are not sure what to say.

In other cases inserting the word because would not make sense because of the way the client has structured her sentence, but it might be possible to rewrite the sentence including the word "because" without changing its essential meaning, e.g. "The thing that upsets me really he says he loves this woman", can be re-written "I am upset because he says he loves this woman".

This means an alternative method of defining an attribution might be to go through the transcript sentence by sentence and designate as attributions those sentences which contain such words as "because" and "therefore" and those sentences that can be re-written to contain one of the words without changing the essential meaning. There are several difficulties with this approach. As clients do not talk in grammatical sentences it is not always easy even to say when one sentence ends and another begins. If the attribution is complex it may take several sentences to complete. There may also be statements which do not contain "because" and cannot easily be re-written

to contain "because" and yet they could still be attributions. Most clients make two major assumptions when they come for counselling. One is that they have come to talk about their marital problems so they don't need always to formally state "my marriage is going wrong because....."; the counsellor will understand that is what they mean. The other assumption that most clients have is that the counsellor will hold a similar value system to their own, so they will assume that it is self evident that it is undesirable to have an insensitive husband or an immature wife, for example. In some cases the counsellor will challenge the statement because she does not share that particular value, but in many cases the counsellor does either share the value or at least understand it and so the statement remains unchallenged. They are then difficult to re-write containing the word "because". Mrs. H, a rather inarticulate client, is a good example of this problem, she made many statements which could be considered to be attributions about her own part in the marital problems, yet none of the statements contained the word "because" and most of them could not be re-written easily to contain it. She assumed that the counsellor shared her view of her problems and made statements like "I've got a bit of a problem with sex". "I cannot bear my husband to touch me". "I seem to be putting all my energy into the home". These sort of statements could be prefaced with a phrase like "my marriage is going wrong because...".

However the implication of this is that an attempt at a rigorous definition would have to be at least a three stage one. Every sentence in the transcript would have to be examined to see if it a). contained an explanation word such as "because", b). could be re-written to contain such a word without changing its meaning, or c). could be prefaced by a sentence like "my marriage has gone wrong because....".

This would be a very time consuming process and in the end the rater would probably make as many value judgments as when using a somewhat vaguer, more "common sense" definition.

The researcher therefore decided to use the transcript of Mrs. Q (who was not part of the research sample) to identify the statements she considered to be attributions. At the same time she attempted to draw up a set of criteria to define why some statements seemed to be attributions and others did not. The researcher discovered whilst reading the transcript that the client sometimes made self attributions and sometimes made attributions about her husband or joint attributions sharing responsibility for something equally with her husband. It seemed easy to distinguish between these different types of attribution and so the researcher subcategorised them in this way.

Number of Raters

If the researcher alone analysed the transcripts she could be accused of bias. It is therefore important that rating of the research transcripts either does not involve the researcher at all or else involves at least one other person rating the transcripts in addition to the researcher. It was decided to use the researcher as one of the raters for several reasons. Since there is no pre-existing definition of an attribution and for the reasons already explained a "common sense" rather than a rigorous definition was developed, the researcher knows what she is trying to define better than any one using her definition at second-hand. Therefore using the researcher as a rater and comparing her ratings with other people's gives some indication of how well she has succeeded in her task of defining an attribution. It may also help her improve her definition and make it more reliable by seeing where the greatest differences between

her and an independent rater occur.

More than one independent rater could be used; however, this might make the task too complex. Raters working independently are not likely to agree on every attribution, particularly since clients do not speak in properly grammatical English. There are likely to be times where the raters almost agree but not quite and where the raters do not agree at all about the actual statement from the text but where they have chosen two separate statements with very similar meanings. In an hour long session clients are likely to repeat their key attributions several times. Decisions therefore have to be made about how to cope with the problems. It was felt that these problems could be more easily dealt with if only two raters were involved. It was decided to defer the decision about how to cope with differences between the raters until a definition had been developed and the independent rater had some practice using it so that the nature of the differences was revealed.

Development of the Final Rating Instructions

When the researcher was satisfied with the instructions and the analysis of the transcript, she then gave the instruction to the independent rater to read. She went through the transcript with her explaining why in the researcher's opinion the selected statements were attributions. When the rater was satisfied she understood what was expected of her she was given an unmarked copy of the transcript, instructions to wait a few days so that she was not just working from memory. Then she marked on the transcript the statements she believed to be attributions. This was to find out if she had actually understood the instructions. She marked the beginning and end of each attribution with a vertical line and in addition wrote a "W" above the clients attribution if she felt the client was talking about herself, an "H" if she felt the client was talking about her husband and a "B"

if she felt the client was talking about herself and her husband jointly. Attributions about close family members such as children or parents were marked "M".

The rater's rating of the transcript was then compared with the researcher's and the rater and the researcher discussed the differences to enable them to arrive at a mutually agreed set of attributions. This was to help the rater learn the task and to find out if there were any ways in which the definition of an attribution could be improved. A final version of the instructions was then drawn up and used for the analysis of all the experimental transcripts.

The following instructions are the final version of the attribution definitions used by both raters when rating the transcript. The sub-categories are defined as if the client is a woman since the first 10 clients were; they were not rewritten for male clients since neither rater found it difficult to translate the meaning.

Rating Instructions

An attribution is an explanation about what is going on in the marital relationship, usually but not always what is going wrong. It is not a factual statement, e.g. "My husband goes to the pub on Saturday nights and gets drunk".

It should include an explanation of why the fact occurs or of the consequences of the fact e.g., "My husband goes to the pub on Saturday night and gets drunk because he hates staying in with me". (A)

"My husband goes to the pub on Saturday nights and gets drunk and I don't like it". (B) Because the client often assumes the counsellor shares her own expectations and values a factual statement sometimes has an implicit statement of feeling within it. "My husband goes to the pub on Saturday nights and gets drunk", could be a statement

of this sort. Whether it is counted as an attribution or not has to be determined from the context of the remark. If there is no evidence from the client's statements of what the underlying significance is then it is not counted. If the client at another point in the interview makes a similar statement with an attached explanation of some kind, then there is no need to include the statement alone as an attribution. Otherwise all explanations should be counted even if they are almost repetitions of previous attributions unless they are badly worded or incoherent in some way.

Sub-categories of Attribution

1. If the explanation is about the client herself or her expectations then it is coded "W".
2. If the explanation is about the client's perception of her husband and his expectation then it is coded "H".
3. If the explanation is in terms of an interaction between the client and her partner, then it is coded "B" in general if there is difficulty deciding whether an explanation is "H" or "W" then it is probably "B".
4. If the explanation is in terms of other close family members e.g. parents or children then it is coded "M".
5. If the explanation is supplied by the counsellor then it is classified "C".

Criteria for resolving differences between raters

When comparing her own and the independent rater's analysis of the transcript the researcher discovered that three categories could be used to describe the agreement between the raters. Firstly complete agreement - in other words the raters had both picked out the same section of transcript as an attribution and they had both classified the attribution in the same way. Secondly minor differences: the two raters had picked out slightly different sections of the transcript

as the attribution but the two versions overlapped considerably.

Thirdly, major differences; here one rater had picked out a section of the transcript as an attribution but the other rater had not.

There were several ways a final set of attributions could be drawn up for the transcript. One way was for the researcher to use only attributions for which there was perfect agreement between the raters. This seemed unrealistically stringent, as there were many attributions for which agreement was close but not perfect. A second alternative therefore was for the researcher to also use the attributions in the minor differences category, either using the independent rater's version or using her judgment about which version to use. It would clearly be better to use the independent rater's version since the researcher might bias the analysis too much if she used her judgment.

These criteria would mean that all of the attributions in the major differences category would be ignored. However, when these attributions were examined in more detail it was discovered that on many occasions the idea contained in an attribution chosen by one rater was also present in an attribution chosen by the other even though they were said in different places in the transcript. This was because the client repeated herself as she described her marital problems. Since it is often the ideas that are most important to the client that are repeated there was a danger that some of the most important attributions from the client's point of view would not be included in the final list because each rater had picked a different occasion on which the idea was expressed as their example.

In order to overcome this problem all of the independent rater's attributions could be used whether they had been picked out by the researcher or not.

However, if this procedure were adopted there would be no point in the researcher rating the transcript. The independent rater may also have her own biases influencing her rating. Assumptions about what are 'reasonable explanations' for marital difficulties, or what could 'reasonably be counted' as explanations - and these may not precisely conform to the assumptions of the researcher.

It would have been possible to ask a third person to judge the attributions in the major differences category for equivalence of content and select those to be included in the final set. This procedure was rejected partly on practical grounds; it would have been difficult to find someone willing to give the necessary time and it would also have increased the length of time required to analyse each transcript. The other reason this was rejected however, was that when the independent rater and the researcher had discussed the training transcript they found it was not difficult to come to a mutual agreement about which attributions should be included in the final version. It was felt therefore that it would be a satisfactory procedure to adopt for all of the research transcripts. As we shall see, the procedure led in practice to the independent rater's choices being adopted more often than the researcher's in cases of major disagreement.

Final Rating Procedure

The same procedure was used to rate all of the research transcripts. Each transcript was first rated independently by the rater (M) and the researcher (J). When both raters had completed their task, the researcher compared the transcripts and underlined the attributions using 3 different biros: blue for attributions which were identical, green for the minor differences category, i.e. each rater had chosen substantially the same section of the transcript but not exactly the same.

Red was used to underline on each transcript attributions which had not been chosen by the other rater. The 2 raters got together and decided whose version of the "green" substantially similar attributions should be used in the final selection and which of the "red" different attributions should be used. As the choice was made the attributions were underlined on a third copy of the transcript. In order to minimise experimenter bias, all of the independent rater's attribution were included in the final set unless she was easily convinced they should not be. By "easily convinced" I mean in the vast majority of cases that she changed her mind willingly on re-reading the passage in the knowledge that there was disagreement, or occasionally on hearing the researcher's reasons for the disagreement.

Similarly none of the researcher's attributions were included unless the independent rater was easily convinced they should be. The raters then moved on to the next transcript. Details of the rating are given in Appendix VI. The order of presentation of the data is the order in which the transcripts were analysed.

Complete Agreement Category

In order to show what sort of statements the raters considered to be attributions the first statement from each transcript that the raters both agreed was an attribution is given below.

Mrs. A

"He is very definitely wanting his cake and eating it". H

Mrs. B

"I do everything you know, the finance, looking after the home, going out to work, everything and it's getting to a stage now where I just cannot cope with it all". W

Mrs. C

"We keep rowing".

B

Mrs. D

"My husband doesn't want me to go out to work, he doesn't want anyone else to look after the children that basically is what we row about at the moment".

H

Mrs. E

"He can have a drinking problem be an alcoholic".

H

Mrs. F

"I got pregnant he was absolutely furious is the only word, he went beserk said you must have an abortion".

H

Mrs. G

"My husband is very victorian sexually and he has been finding it very difficult because we have been having trouble having a child".

H

Mrs. H

"I cannot bear my husband to touch me at all".

W

Mrs. I

"We both have very strong characters both voice our own opinions".

B

Mrs. J

"I was beginning to get grieved saying can't you come home sometimes, etc, it's always work, work, work".

W

Mr. M

"Me and me wife are just not compatible".

B

Mr. N

"Generally I get on with most people".

H

Mr. K

"When we was married we was more or less inseparable".

B

Mr. L

"She has been very much a prop to me".

W

Mrs. P

"He is still seeing this other woman which is against my wishes so he is not respecting my wishes".

H

Mr. O

"In a sense I still haven't got to grips with um the problems particularly the sexual problems, for me it's still there".

H

Mr. X

"I know she (mother-in-law) wouldn't like it if we got back together again".

M

Mrs. Y

"I have a recurring thrush infection and no matter what I do for it, it goes away and it comes back again and sometimes it really hurts you see inside and that could be doing it as well".

W

H means the attribution is about the husband's contribution to the problem.

W means the attribution is about the wife's contribution to the problem.

B means the speaker is sharing the responsibility between the partners.

M means the speaker is attributing part of the responsibility to a close family member.

These examples illustrate the wide variety of ways that clients express themselves and describe their problems, highlighting the problem of producing a definition of an attribution which could produce almost 100% agreement between the raters.

The list contains no examples of statements by the counsellor considered by both raters to be attributions; this is because the counsellor tends not to attempt to offer attributions until she feels she is beginning to understand what the problem is.

Two counsellor attributions follow one made by the researcher and the other by the other counsellor.

"So the only way out of that is to say I must be inadequate because I'm not enjoying it or to take your mother's message well he must be inadequate he's not helping me enjoy it".

"It sounds to me as if there's half of you that wants security and to feel safe which may be partly because your parents are divorced and the other half of you that really wants to be free to just experiment and meet different people and not be held down".

Minor differences category

There were three ways the raters disagreed which covered most of the attributions in the minor differences category. One rater may have picked out a longer section to call the attribution, this was usually due to the rater including a filler sentence or phrase which actually didn't add anything to the meaning of what was said, e.g. "John sat down one evening and he said I don't think our relationship holds anything anymore." The other rater felt it did not matter whether he sat down or stood up to say this, and so she started with the word 'he'. When the raters conferred they agreed the attribution should start with the word 'he'. One rater may have picked out a long sentence and called it one attribution whereas the other rater may have felt it contained two slightly different ideas, e.g. "I think he is quite happy living in ignorance, I mean he cannot cope with worries like that he cannot he panics, he gets worried and gets himself in a state."

The other rater felt there were two attributions present "He is quite happy living in ignorance" and "He can't cope with worries like that he can't he panics, he gets worried and gets himself into a state." In this case the joint decision was to treat this as two attributions as it was felt that the inability to cope with anxiety does not mean the person is inevitably happy to live in ignorance.

"I used to have friends in and out all the time but now I just cannot be bothered and if I do go out I'm tense

all the time."

The other rater split this into two attributions, "I used to have friends in and out all the time but now I just cannot be bothered" plus "If I do go out I'm tense all the time."

Again the joint decision was to treat this as two different attributions since the two ideas expressed are different.

In general it was more common for the joint decision to agree with who ever had split the statement into two attributions, but not always, e.g. It sounds in a way like you are testing each other out at the moment." "Things went bad at the

time when you got pregnant really bad and they haven't improved since because the whole of that episode got swept under the carpet and not really resolved and now you have found out that he is having an affair and that's triggered you off into talking to each other again." One rater broke the statement into two attributions as shown, the other used the whole statement as one attribution. In discussion both raters decided the whole statement was in fact only one attribution. The information in the second sentence was intended as evidence to support the therapist's contention that the couple were testing each other out.

The final reason for not quite perfect agreement between raters was if each rater felt the attribution was about a different person: this was a very rare form of disagreement, e.g. "He says stupid things, well perhaps they don't seem stupid to him, but they annoy me."

One rater considered this to be the women talking about herself because of the sentence "they annoy me." The other considered the woman was talking about her husband because of the sentence "he says stupid things." As in the majority of cases where this disagreement occurred it was decided the attribution was a joint one because it is about the interaction between the partners.

The raters found that it was generally easy to decide whether the client was talking about herself or her partner or their interaction, or some other close family member. Sometimes one rater would choose a long statement and call it a joint attribution, but the other rater would break the statement into two parts and call one an attribution about the husband and the other an attribution about the wife. When this happened it was more common to agree that there were two attributions present e.g. "I try to have a talk with her now and again, it's very difficult because she doesn't want to talk at all."

I'm making an effort myself I try to have a talk with her now and again.

"It's very difficult because she doesn't want to talk at all unless it's about something that she's either doing or has been doing."

One rater picked out the first statement and said it was a joint attribution, the other selected a slightly larger portion of the transcript and split it into a self attribu-

tion and a partner attribution. The joint decision was to include the slightly longer two attributions version. This example, in fact, is a case where the independent rater's version was adopted because she was not easily persuaded that the researcher's version was better.

An example where the joint decision was to use the joint attribution is "When we have rows he tries to put it across that it's all my fault." H

"I end up feeling guilt." W

"He tries to put it across that it's all my fault and I end up feeling guilty." B

Here the joint mutual decision was to use the interactive attribution because she is blaming her guilt on his behaviour; it was also decided to start the attribution with the words "When we have rows" because this makes it clearer what the context of her guilt is. Although one example has been given where the raters could not agree easily and so the independent rater's version was chosen, on the whole in the minor differences category this was rare and most decisions were mutual.

Major Differences

When the major differences category of attributions was examined more closely the initial decision, based on the practice transcript, that the raters should confer and draw up a mutually agreeable attribution set seemed justified. The clients did repeat themselves, often within the same few sentences. This led to a situation where the raters would pick out different segments of the same paragraph where the client had said the same thing in different words. These had to be counted as two attributions in the

major differences category to avoid the researcher making value judgments about equivalents, e.g. ("He said I just don't back losers he said she's either going under or I'm going under he said I can't cope with this") and he said and I was so hurt and upset you know ((He said I just don't back losers so that is how he saw me at the time as a loser and he wasn't going to have anything to do with it he was fighting for survival)). One rater picked out the statement in the single bracket as the attribution the other picked the statement in the double bracket. These two statements are so similar it would be very easy for the researcher to say they were equivalent, but for some attributions the decision is not so clear cut., e.g. (Oh haven't you done the dinner he said, no that's not my job, that's your job), I've been at work all day. He said I haven't made the bed. ((He'd left the bed he hadn't done a thing, had been asleep all afternoon, had been drinking in the morning and I'd done dinner)) .

In this case the two statements are about the same event but the emphasis is slightly different. The first version gives the wife's explanation of why her husband doesn't cook the dinner, the second version is simply a catalogue of all the things he didn't do for her. In this example the two raters decided to include the first version in the final set of attributions and leave out the second, because the first version attempted to explain why her husband might be behaving like this. It was felt that the two raters coming to a mutually agreed decision that the attributions were equivalent, and which should be used was superior to the researcher making this decision alone.

Attempts were made to combat the problem of repetition the raters agreed that if the client was being very repetitious the first example of the idea should be selected, unless it did not make such good sense as a later version. However, this did not seem to work very well. The above example is taken from the third transcript analysed and the first example from the ninth.

Not all of the attributions in this major differences category were simply examples of each rater picking out a different version of the same idea. In all but one of the analyses the independent rater had picked out more attributions than the researcher. Unless it was clear to both raters that they had each chosen a different version of the same concept expressed twice within a few sentences each attribution was discussed on its own merits. If both raters felt it was an attribution then it was included in the final set; if on reflection neither felt it was an attribution it was dropped. In cases of disagreement then the rule of using the statement if it had been picked by the independent rater and dropping it if it had been picked by the researcher was applied. As discussions proceeded it became apparent that the main reason the independent rater picked out more attributions was because of a difference in their approach when trying to decide which statements were attributions. The researcher had adopted a cautious approach and if in doubt whether a statement was an attribution said no and did not mark it on her copy of the transcript. The rater on the other hand decided if there was any possibility in her mind that a statement was an attribution it should be included in her selection. On five of the 18 transcripts the researcher had selected fewer than 10 attributions that had not been selected by the independent rater. It would be expected that if the researcher felt more confident in her own choices then a greater proportion of her attributions from the major differences category

would end up in the final selection than the independent raters. In fact in 11 of the 18 transcripts a greater proportion of the rater's attributions was used and in one the percentage used was the same for both raters, so in only 6 of the transcripts were a greater proportion of the researcher's attributions used than the rater's. This suggests that the strategy of using the independent rater's attributions in cases of dispute and not using the researcher's worked reasonably well.

"We don't want to split up we don't want to cause any aggro like that we love each other", is an example of an attribution picked by the independent rater that the researcher also agreed was an attribution when she saw it.

"We have come to the opinion that we have just got to have some kind of outside influence because family cannot help", is an example of an attribution included in the final selection, although the researcher was not quite convinced because the rater was sure it should be included. "for me that didn't work you see and it caused money friction", is an example of a statement that the rater originally chose but decided on reflection that it was not really an attribution, so it was not used.

"He says I have got used to him, it's just a comfortable relationship", is an example of an attribution chosen by the researcher that the rater agreed was an attribution. "There is more than one person in Bletchley commutes every day and he finds that extremely harrowing", is an example of a statement chosen by the researcher which she afterwards agreed was not an attribution. "He was a bit put out because it meant the squash night that he wanted, had to go"; is an example of a statement that the researcher wanted to include in the final selection, but the rater was unhappy about it and it was

dropped.

Sub division of the Attributions

The sub division of the attributions into self, partner and joint proved to be the easiest task for the raters, agreement between them was almost perfect.

Self Attribution examples -

1. "During the depression I have been an absolutely abominable person to live with. I've been very violent".
2. "It's good for everybody to have an interest out of the home but perhaps I resented this that she was out so much".
3. "I'm quite a capable person".

Partner Attribution examples -

1. "He doesn't seem to have any sense of responsibility".
2. "She's very possessive".
3. "He is a good hard worker for what he gets".

Joint Attribution examples -

1. "We don't talk about things at all really".
2. "We don't have anything in common".
3. "Basically we are homely we like to be at home, we both of us share that".

Not surprisingly the majority of attributions are about what is wrong with the relationship, or the individuals in it, however, most clients also make some more positive attributions. The third example in each group is an example of a positive attribution. These attributions are important because some clients see themselves as all bad and their partner as all good or vice versa.

A category was also used in this first classification for attributions suggesting that close relatives other than the marital partner had influenced or caused the marital problem.

In fact this category was rarely used, Mrs. B being the client with the most attributions in this category (13 i.e. 24%) e.g. "When I get into a state no-one comes and pacifies me or tries to say oh well don't worry mum everything's OK. They just leave me on my own and things sort of build up worse then because you are left with it yourself".

This client had two teenage children who she felt did not contribute enough practically or financially to the running of the family home.

Summary

This chapter considered the methodological and practical problems involved in collecting attributions and defining attributions. With the objective of finding a method suitable for identifying as many attributions made by clients about their marital problems as possible as reliably as possible. It was decided to use clients free descriptions of their problems collected by tape recording counselling sessions and transcribing the tapes. It was decided that first counselling sessions would be concentrated on, and that a minimum suitable sample size was ten female clients. Unfortunately, due to the reluctance of counsellors to take part in the research, the main client sample was the researcher's own clients with two clients from one other counsellor who acted as controls. It was decided to identify attributions using the researcher and one other rater using a fairly generalised definition of an attribution. The researcher and the independent rater arrived at a mutually agreed set of attributions by rating the transcripts independently and then discussing together the attributions over which they did not agree completely. The discussion was conducted on the basis that all of the independent rater's attributions would be included in the final set unless she was easily

convinced that they should not be. Attributions chosen by the researcher and not the independent rater were only included if the rater was easily convinced that they should be. It was felt that agreement between the raters was satisfactory given the problems of producing a good rigorous definition of an attribution.

As expected, clients do indeed make attributions when talking to their counsellor about their marital problems. This is not a result of the counsellor being familiar with attribution theory and somehow, perhaps by the questions she asked, ensuring that the clients made attributions, because the clients of the other counsellor also made attributions. There were considerable variations in the number of attributions made by clients, the totals ranged from a minimum of 24 to a maximum of 124 in an hour's session. Most of these attributions were about the problems in the marriage, although a few attributions were more positive, about good aspects of the relationship or good qualities of the two partners. Both raters found it easy to decide whether the clients were talking about themselves or their partners or about both of them jointly. It was found that most clients in fact describe the problems in terms of themselves or their partner, rather than in terms of their interaction; in most cases the proportion of joint attributions was low. This will be examined in more detail and discussed in chapter 9. Clients also do not attribute many of their problems to close family members such as children or parents. This will also be discussed in chapter 9. The counsellors also made attributions; in fact the largest number of counsellor attributions came from the other counsellor (29) and not the researcher. This means that it is not likely that the researcher's attributions were made solely as a result of her reading about attribution theory. The counsellors' attributions will also be discussed in more detail in chapter 9.

The next chapter concerns an attempt to sub-categorise the attributions into the categories used in some of the laboratory studies of attribution theory.

ATTRIBUTION THEORY - ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the preliminary transcript analysis and investigation of the first two research hypotheses, that both clients and counsellors will make attributions in a marital counselling session. This chapter investigates the final two hypotheses: (4) clients' attributions can be sub-classified into a number of categories, and (5) in a marital counselling session a client will make more situational than dispositional attributions about her own behaviour and more dispositional than situational about her partner's. The initial hypothesis deliberately did not specify how many categories would be needed to sub-classify the attributions or what those categories might be, since most previous studies have not used free speech attributional statements and so there is no pre-existing classification system which can be applied to this research. The methodological problems involved in developing a classification system are therefore discussed first, and then the development process is described. The results of the analysis using the classification system are then described and discussed, together with the implications for future attribution theory research.

Methodology

The attributions made by the clients had already been broken down into four categories - 'self', 'partner', 'joint', 'close family member' - these categories defining the focus of the clients' attribution. It was decided that only the 'self' and 'partner' attributions would be sub-classified.

This was because the joint attributions were more complex since they were about some aspect of the couples' interaction. The client may, for example, link some aspect of her situation and some aspect of her husband's personality. The 'close family member' attributions were also not sub-classified largely because they were relatively few in number and some clients made no attributions at all in this category.

Since there were no pre-existing well defined categories to use to sub-classify attributions, the researcher had to decide how to set about the task of sub-classification. A possible strategy for this is to inspect the attribution lists and derive categories totally from the data by clustering the attributions which seem to be similar and then defining these clusters. The difficulty with this method is that if the categories bear no relationship to categories used in previous attribution studies, it is difficult to make any comparisons at all with previous studies. An alternative would be to devise category definitions from the theoretical literature without reference to the collected data and then impose them on the data. The problem with this method is that it may mean that many attributions may not easily fit the categories. Since there are no generally accepted definitions for sub-categories, most researchers tending to use their own unique definitions. This approach does not actually mean the data generated are easily compared with other studies.

It was felt, because of the problems associated with either of these approaches, that a mixture of both approaches would be more productive. The theoretical literature would be examined for possible sub-categories of attribution, and these sub-categories would be defined with reference to both the theoretical literature and the collected data. It may be that a category that seems important in theory is not used in practice, or that categories are needed which have not yet been considered by

attribution theorists. The best developed categories from the theoretical literature are "situational" and dispositional", however Semin (1980) has suggested that expectancy attributions might be important. Jones and Davis (1965) considered motivational attributions might be important, and Nisbett and Valins (1971) have suggested that people make attributions about attitudes as well as behaviour. It was therefore decided to try to develop definitions for 'situational', 'dispositional', 'expectancy', 'motivational' and 'attitudinal' attributions with reference both to the theoretical literature and the collected attributions. If there were large numbers of attributions which did not seem to fit these categories, then it would be necessary to develop other categories by inspection of the unclassified statements. If one of the theoretical categories did not seem to fit any of the statements, it could be abandoned. The derivation of the definitions will be described in more detail in the following sections of the chapter.

Once the researcher had developed the definitions and produced instructions for rating the statements, the instructions could be used by other raters so that the researcher's classification could be checked. This could be done as in the first stage of the analysis with raters conferring with a view to agreeing on the classification of each statement and improving the definitions in the process. Alternatively the instructions for classification could be given to a number of different raters who do not confer at all. It was decided that this would be a better procedure. It means that the definitions have been used in the same way throughout; if the raters are conferring the use of the definitions is likely to change over time and this makes comparisons between attribution sets very difficult. If the raters were conferring then testing of the situational/dispositional hypothesis across the attribution sets would also be difficult.

The exact rating procedure will be described and discussed in more detail in a later section of the chapter.

Situational and Dispositional Attributions

These two categories of attributions will be considered together since a number of researchers have defined these categories such that any statement which does not fit one category - e.g. dispositional - is automatically considered to be in the other category.

Nisbett et al (1973) used data which are closest in nature to the data collected in this research, since their subjects gave unstructured written explanations of their choice of girlfriend and major subject. However, their definitions are not suitable for use with the current data. Their dispositional category includes any statement about the disposition of the actor even if it also contained a statement about his girlfriend. In this study statements which are about both partners have already been put into a sub-category of joint attributions. It is, of course, possible simply to count these automatically as dispositional attributions about the person talking. However, to categorise a statement like "We are both hot tempered", as being a statement about the client and not at all about her partner seems to be distorting the data unnecessarily. Similarly they considered all statements which did not include any information about the chooser as 'entity' (or situational). This would mean all attributions the client made about her partner would be considered to be entity attributions. This again would be a distortion of the data collected in this research. It is evident from the nature of the partner attributions that the clients do not simply regard their partner as part of the situation they are in they perceive him as a person who acts independently of them, and who has his own personality, motivations, expectations, attitudes and situational constraints.

Could and Sigall (1977) used a different method of classifying situational and dispositional attributions, but theirs is also inadequate for use with the data from this research. They treat situational and dispositional attributions as the two ends of a bipolar scale. They also include characteristics of the female as part of their situational category. In their experiment there is some justification for this since their scenario was a video of a man attempting to make a date with a woman he did not know. However, as already explained this does not seem justified in the context of a client talking about her partner in a counselling session. McArthur's (1972) categories of person and situation are more appropriate to this research but she does not define them in a way that is detailed enough for use with unstructured data. In general it was felt that an "if it's not one it's the other" approach to situational and dispositional attributions was not adequate for categorising the wealth of information produced when people are talking freely. The researcher therefore decided to define them independently of each other.

Personality or dispositional attributions were defined as follows:- "Personality attributions are statements about the personality or disposition of self or partner". It was decided that it would be better to rely on the rater's own knowledge of what personality meant rather than trying to define it in more detail as this might produce confusion and misunderstanding.

Initially the definition of a situational attribution was simply "An explanation of the behaviour of self or spouse in terms of the situation they are in". However, when the researcher looked at a few lists of attributions it was clear that this simple definition would not be adequate. Illness is a theme in some of the transcripts and some experimenters include this as a situational factor.

This seems logical since poor health is commonly seen as something that happens to a person and is not under their conscious control. However, since illness actually happens to the person's body and most situational factors such as a person's job, where they live etc., are external to the individual, it was felt necessary to add a sentence to the definition stating "This includes factors such as poor health which happen to a person and are not directly under their control". Using two independent definitions for personality and situational attributions, it was evident that there were many attributions which would not comfortably fit these two categories. The decision to define other categories based on ideas discussed in the theoretical literature seemed justified.

Expectancy Attributions

Semin (1980) suggested that social and cultural expectations can be an important aspect of the attribution process, but they have been neglected by attribution theorists. It was hypothesised in chapter 6 that attributions about expectations might be important within marital conflicts, since in present-day Britain there are no longer universal norms about expected behaviour of husbands and wives. It is up to each individual couple to negotiate their own norms, and the different expectations they each bring into the relationship can become a source of conflict.

An example of an attribution which did not seem to easily classifiable as situational or dispositional and seemed to be about expectations is:- "I just cope with everything that is my role, to do everything, and they expect it of me". It could be argued that "doing everything" is part of the situation the client is in, but to classify the attribution as situational loses some of its meaning. The client is really complaining about the fact that her family expect her to do everything, although she appears to have initially accepted that role.

On looking through several attribution lists it was evident that attributions about expectancy came into two broad categories - those concerned with the clients themselves or their partners, or some generalised attributions about husbands or wives or marriages. Both of these types were included in the definition; it was decided not to make them two separate categories because in practice the purely generalised attributions were small in number. The definition was formulated as - "An expectancy attribution is a statement about expectancy this can take two forms, (a) an assertion about what they or their partner should or should not do either explicitly or by implication, (b) a more generalisable social expectancy statement about appropriate behaviour in the circumstances.

Motivation Attributions

Jones and Davis (1965) have suggested that attributions about motives may be important. An example of an attribution from a transcript which seems to be about motivation is - "He is addicted to the television, honestly he is addicted to it, he'll watch anything, I think he just does it to escape from whatever's going on around him". This attribution is partly situational since it is about television watching, it is also partly expectational since there is a clear implication that this lady does not expect her husband to watch so much television. However, to use either of these classifications is to lose some of the meaning present in the whole statement which is about why this woman thinks her husband watches so much TV, in other words it's about his motivation. The first part of the attribution, "He is addicted to the television", on its own could perhaps be considered a personality attribution, but in this case the woman has elaborated and explained why she thinks her husband watches so much TV; therefore to categorise the complete attribution would lose some of the meaning of the statement.

Jones and Davis suggest that when making motivational attributions the attributor is acting like a lawyer rather than a scientist. He is making judgments about whether the motivated behaviour was intentional, incidental or accidental. In the example above, the woman is clearly suggesting her husband's behaviour is intentional - he is deliberately choosing to watch TV to avoid getting involved in other things. It was felt however that an attempt to sub-divide motivational attributions at this stage might be unnecessarily complicated. There is no pre-existing adequate definition of a motivational attribution let alone a definition of three sub-categories. A single definition for all types of motivational attribution was therefore developed. "A motivational attribution is a statement of motivation or intention of self or spouse to behave in a particular way to avoid or achieve a particular outcome; the intention may or may not succeed".

Attitude Attributions

Nisbett and Valins (1971) have suggested that people make attributions about attitudes as well as behaviour. They seem to include emotions in their attitude category since one of their experiments was about an attitude of fear towards snakes. In the context of marital difficulties there seem to be plenty of attributions about emotions for example, "It upsets him, the fact, that I can cope without him and he cannot cope without me". This type of attribution is not given much attention in the experimental literature, perhaps because most laboratory experiments involve contrived situations between strangers and so an emotional interaction can be ignored. In some cases the distinction between an attitude attribution and a dispositional one may be blurred. In general, attitude attributions are more specific than dispositional; for example, to say someone was a fearful person is dispositional and implies generalised fear of many people or things, while a fear of snakes is a specific fear and does not imply the person's fear is more generalised.

Similarly in the transcript example the client is not saying her husband is the type of person who gets easily upset; he is upset about one specific thing - she can cope without him and he cannot cope without her.

An attitude attribution was defined as "A statement about attitudes towards self or spouse or activities of self or spouse, or spouse's perceived attitudes to self or partner or self or partner's behaviour".

Additional Categories

When the researcher examined the attribution lists with these five categories in mind, it was found that most of the attributions could be assigned to one of the categories. A few were quite difficult to place, but there did not seem to be a different specific category to put them in; rather, they seemed to have little in common. Since the five categories already defined are categories which have been discussed by attribution theorists, and in the case of situational and dispositional extensively used in experimental research, it was felt adequate to use only these categories and attempt to fit all of the attributions into them.

Rating Procedure

As discussed earlier, it had been decided that the final rating instructions would be used by raters who would work independently and never discuss their ratings with each other. The researcher therefore drew up a list of instructions which included the definitions for each category already given, together with some examples of possible typical attributions from each category, (see appendix VII for the final version of the instructions).

Since even the researcher who had developed the classification system found some attributions very hard to classify, it was felt that it might be useful to ask raters to not only classify the attributions,

but to rate their confidence in the categories they had chosen. If it was felt that a rater was very uncertain on a large proportion of the attributions then that rater's data might have to be discarded. If all of the raters chosen seemed to be uncertain most of the time, it would suggest that the category definitions were not at all adequate and would need to be revised.

A four-point scale was used for the certainty rating; A represented 'completely certain', B 'fairly certain', C 'not very certain', and D 'very uncertain'. Letters were used so as not to create confusion, since the numbers 1-5 were being used for the attribution categories.

Each rater therefore went through all of the attribution lists assigning a category number to each statement and a certainty rating.

Number of Raters

Since the definitions were fairly basic and very much a first attempt at the task, it was felt that perfect agreement between raters was very unlikely to be achieved. It was therefore decided to have an odd number of raters so that a criterion of agreement could be that if an overall majority of the raters chose a particular category for an attribution, then that would be considered to be satisfactory agreement.

It was decided that 5 raters including the researcher would be used so that the criterion of agreement would be that 3 out of the 5 raters put an attribution into the same category. Any attributions which did not meet this criterion would be discarded. It was felt that 5 raters was a reasonable number; only 3 raters might mean a large number of statements had to be discarded. Using more than 5 raters poses practical problems, since the task is very time consuming and it might be hard to find enough people willing to do the task.

It also means the criteria for including an attribution is less stringent, and since there are only 5 categories of attribution, chance alone might produce agreement sufficient for an attribution to be categorised.

The Raters

The experimenter was one rater; two of the other raters were female marriage guidance counsellors. The independent rater from the first stage of the analysis was also a rater; she is not a counsellor. It was felt that it was acceptable for her to be involved in both stages of the analysis as the classification system was not developed until after the first stage of the analysis was complete. The researcher had therefore never discussed with her how the attributions were going to be analysed after they had been collected. The final rater was a man who was also not a counsellor. It was felt that it might be useful to find out whether a man used the classification system in a different way to the female raters.

Analysis of Results

Tables were drawn up of the raters analysis of the clients self and partner attributions and the level of agreement between the raters. These tables are in appendix VII^I. When measuring agreement between the raters, the attribution categories they each used for a particular attribution were compared, ignoring the certainty ratings. The certainty ratings showed that on the whole the raters had felt confident in their category choices.

The percentage agreement between the raters was calculated for clients self and partner attributions separately, a total of 41 percentages altogether. Of these 41 percentages 29 were over 75% agreement, i.e. almost three quarters, and of these 29, 10 were over 90% agreement. None were under 50% agreement and only 4 were under 66% i.e. two thirds agreement. Altogether of the 1,001 attributions, 808 reached the

criterion of at least 3 out of the 5 raters agreeing on the category, this represents 81% of the total. For 432 of the attributions at least 4 out of the 5 raters agreed on the category this represents 43% on slightly under half of the attributions. There was perfect agreement between the raters for 198 of the attributions i.e. 20%. Although this is a fairly small percentage, since there were five raters and five possible categories that each rater could use, even 20% is a considerably greater agreement than chance alone would predict.

It was felt that these agreement levels were satisfactory given that the definitions were fairly basic and the raters did not have any opportunity to practice using the definitions. Improvements in the definitions may enable even higher levels of agreement to be achieved in the future.

Agreement Examples

In order to give an idea of the sort of attributions the raters were in agreement about, 10 examples are given, one of a self attribution and one of a partner attribution, these have been taken at random from the female client attribution lists using only attributions where the agreement between the raters is perfect.

Category 1 - Personality

Self

"When I'm worried I don't show it you see, I turn it on myself".

Partner

"He's very intelligent".

Category 2 - Situation

Self

"I have had alot of trouble over the last few years with my stomach, I keep having periods all the time".

Partner

"Whether that is part of the reason that he won't come back for the moment because he is in so much money difficulty".

Category 3 - Expectancy

Self

"Financially I suppose my husband should be the one if we haven't got enough money should do overtime or something".

Partner

"I feel you know if I'm in that sort of state, why doesn't my husband worry about me".

Category 4 - Attitude and Emotion

Self

"At Christmas we stopped sleeping together and it worried me in one way but not in another, I thought well from now on it's either going to go one way or another".

Partner

"He says he doesn't want a divorce, he does care about me".

Category 5 - Motivation

Self

There were no category 5 self attributions from a female client where agreement between the raters was perfect. The following example therefore is by a male client.

"At the onset it was just a deliberate thing to do to get back at my wife, but the trouble is I fell in love with this person".

Partner

"To me that's all it is, a row for a good excuse to go out, he doesn't want to stay in because he has told me it's too boring".

Use of Categories

Table 8.1

The number of attributions per category for each
rater and for the agreed attribution set

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| R. Initial Class | 111 | 204 | 132 | 421 | 133 | 1,001 |
| R. % of Total | 11% | 20% | 13% | 42% | 13% | |
| J. Initial Class | 126 | 134 | 143 | 389 | 209 | 1,001 |
| J. % of Total | 13% | 13% | 14% | 39% | 21% | |
| M. Initial Class | 150 | 59 | 348 | 363 | 81 | 1,001 |
| M. % of Total | 15% | 6% | 35% | 36% | 8% | |
| S. Initial Class | 94 | 195 | 334 | 309 | 69 | 1,001 |
| S. % of Total | 9% | 19% | 33% | 31% | 7% | |
| C. Initial Class | 125 | 104 | 362 | 373 | 37 | 1,001 |
| C. % of Total | 12% | 10% | 36% | 37% | 4% | |
| Agreed Set | 106 | 111 | 212 | 314 | 65 | 808 |
| A. Set% of Total | 13% | 14% | 21% | 39% | 8% | 81% |
| R. Agreed Class | 79 | 105 | 99 | 254 | 49 | 586 |
| % Agreed Class | 75% | 95% | 47% | 81% | 75% | 73% |
| % R. Original Class | 71% | 51% | 75% | 60% | 37% | 59% |
| J. Agreed Class | 89 | 93 | 113 | 246 | 61 | 602 |
| % Agreed Class | 84% | 84% | 53% | 78% | 94% | 75% |
| % J. Original Class | 71% | 69% | 79% | 63% | 29% | 60% |
| M. Agreed Class | 93 | 56 | 193 | 245 | 51 | 638 |
| % Agreed Class | 88% | 50% | 91% | 78% | 78% | 79% |
| % M. Original Class | 62% | 95% | 55% | 67% | 63% | 64% |
| S. Agreed Class | 79 | 105 | 188 | 220 | 38 | 630 |
| % Agreed Class | 75% | 95% | 89% | 70% | 58% | 78% |
| % S. Original Class | 84% | 54% | 56% | 71% | 55% | 63% |
| C. Agreed Class | 86 | 69 | 179 | 238 | 26 | 598 |
| % Agreed Class | 81% | 62% | 84% | 76% | 40% | 74% |
| % C. Original Class | 69% | 66% | 49% | 64% | 70% | 60% |

Table 8.1 shows that for 3 of the raters M, S and C categories 3 and 4 i.e. expectancy and attitude were the most frequently used categories accounting between them for about two thirds of the attributions, and for raters S and C category 5 - motivation is the least used.

Raters R and J also use category 4 most frequently, but they use category 3 less often, in both cases their least used category is 1 - personality. Their use of category 1 however does not differ greatly from the other 3 raters, so the most important differences seem to be that raters R and J use category 3 less frequently than the other 3 raters and category 5 more frequently.

When the raters are compared for how many of their original attribution choices are in the final agreed set of attributions, there is on the whole consistency between the raters. The smallest number of original choices included in the final set is 586 or 73% from rater R, the highest number is 638 or 79% from rater M.

Taking each category separately and making a rater by rater comparison of numbers of statements included in the final attribution set can reveal differences in the ways each rater has used the categories and this can give some indication of where the definitions need to be improved. Rater R for example has picked out 95% of the category 2 attributions present in the final set - a high level of agreement, but this represents only 51% of the attributions he originally classified as category 2 suggesting he has a rather broader interpretation of the meaning of situation than other raters. This also applies to rater 5's choice of category 2 attributions, again 95% of the agreed attributions in this category were picked out by this rater but this only represents 54% of the total number of attributions she put in this category. This contrasts with rater M who has only picked out 50% of the final category 2 attributions but this represents 95% of all of the category 2 attributions she chose, suggesting her use of the definition is rather narrower than raters R and S. Category 1 on the other hand seems to be used in a similar way by all of the raters: the minimum percentage of attributions chosen in this category and part of the agreed set is 75%; this rises to a maximum of 88%

The minimum percentage of the raters original category one choices is 62% for rater M, and this rises to 84% for rater S. Similar figures apply to category 4 suggesting there is broad consensus about the use of this category. Category 3 contrasts raters R and J, who have chosen only 47% and 53% of the agreed attributions representing 75% and 79% respectively of their original choices for this category, with raters M, S and C who have picked out a higher percentage of the agreed attributions - but this represents a lower percentage of their original choices of attributions for this category. Category 5 again shows variation between the raters; the variations in this category are the greatest suggesting perhaps that it is the one where the definition is the least adequate. This may be part of the reason why this category was not used very frequently. There were only 65 category 5 attributions picked out by at least 3 raters. Rater J (the researcher) chose 61 of these (94%) but this represented only 29% of the total attributions she assigned to category 5. Rater S had picked only 58% of the agreed category 5 attributions and this represented only 55% of the attributions she had originally put in this category.

In summary therefore, the data suggests that categories 1 and 4 are reasonably adequately defined. Categories 2 and 3 are used more narrowly by some raters than others, suggesting perhaps that the raters need clearer guidelines for using the categories. The worst definition appears to be that for category 5, this may be because it is a bad definition but another possibility is that this is partly due to its positioning on the list. If raters are looking at each definition in turn, they may be using category 5 as the place to put attributions which they have not already been able to classify easily. If this is the case, then perhaps the category needs eliminating or the "spare" attributions need examining to see if there is a more adequate description

for them than motivation.

Better than criterion inter-rater agreement

An alternative method of examining the adequacy of the category definitions is to look at the proportions of attributions in each category where agreement between the raters is either perfect or where 4 out of 5 raters agree.

Table 8.2

Numbers of attributions in each category for different criteria of agreement

| Category | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Criteria 3 | 106 | 111 | 212 | 314 | 65 | 808 |
| % Total | 13% | 14% | 26% | 39% | 8% | |
| Criteria 4 | 73 | 65 | 93 | 177 | 24 | 432 |
| % Total | 17% | 15% | 22% | 41% | 6% | |
| % Agreed set | 67% | 59% | 44% | 56% | 37% | 53% |
| Criteria 5 | 40 | 31 | 38 | 84 | 5 | 198 |
| % Total | 20% | 16% | 19% | 42% | 3% | |
| % Agreed Set | 38% | 28% | 18% | 27% | 8% | 25% |

Table 8.2 suggests that category 1 is the category with the best inter-rater agreement, of the 106 attributions in this category 73 i.e. 67% have at least 4 raters agreeing that this is the correct category, and for 40 or 38% the agreement between raters is perfect. The next best categories are 2 and 4, with 56% of the chosen attributions agreed by 4 raters and 28% and 27% respectively for perfect agreement. Category 5 has the poorest agreement, with only 37% of attributions chosen by 4 raters and 8% a total of only 5 attributions where agreement between raters is perfect. These data therefore supports the data from inter-rater differences in suggesting that category 5 needs redefinition. Category 1's definition is reasonably satisfactory and there is room for improvement in the definitions of categories

2, 3 and 4.

Rater Disagreement:

It is also possible to examine the ways in which the raters disagreed, for the 193 statements which did not reach the minimum criterion of 3 raters agreeing about their categories. There are three possible ways for this to happen. Each rater could put the statement into a different category, this in fact only occurred four times in total.

The four attributions were:-

"I get to the point where I'm frightened to speak because no matter what I say I cannot win".

"He knows part of his problem and yet he sits there and lets it happen, he doesn't do anything to help himself, he just lets it happen".

"He (the doctor) seemed to think if I cannot sort those problems out then I am not going to be able to sort myself out".

"She won't speak".

Another possibility is that two raters chose the same category and the other three each chose a different category so that four out of the five categories have been used, this occurred a total of 45 times. The final possibility that two raters agreed on one category, two on another and the fifth chose another therefore accounts for the remaining 145 statements. This suggests that an improvement in the definition of one or both of the categories involved in the most common pairings might lead to a reduction in confusion and an increase in agreement. It is therefore useful to see what were the most common pairings of categories.

Table 8.3

Category Pairings for Statements which
did not reach the agreement criterion

| | | | | |
|------------------|---|----|----|----|
| | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 Personality | 3 | 6 | 17 | 1 |
| 2 Situation | | 14 | 16 | 3 |
| 3 Expectation | | | 46 | 18 |
| 4 Attitude | | | | 20 |

Table 8:3 shows that category 1 is paired with another category the least number of times of any category it is almost never confused with categories 2 and 5. The commonest confusion for category 1 is with category 4. Category 2 is seldom confused with categories 1 or 5 and more often categories 3 and 4. However, category 2 is also infrequently confused with other categories. The commonest confusion, with 46 pairings, is between categories 3 and 4. This possibly reflects the fact that these are the most commonly used categories overall. However it does suggest the reliability of the categorisation could perhaps be improved by emphasising the differences between these two categories. Category 5 was the least used category with only 65 statements reaching the criterion of agreement by 3 raters. However a further 42 statements were put into category 5 by 2 of the raters, this is more than for categories 1 and 2 (27 and 36 respectively) although more category 1 and 2 attributions reached the criterion of agreement by 3 raters. This is further evidence that the definition for this category is particularly poor and suggests that it needs improving rather than abandoning.

Category 5 was most frequently confused with categories 4 and 3, in fact these were the next most common confusions after that between categories 3 and 4.

Another fruitful source of data about category confusion are those statements which have reached the criterion of agreement by 3 raters, but where the other two raters have agreed on a different category. This also suggests uncertainty about the exact differences between the categories most commonly paired in this way.

Table 8:4

Combinations of attribution ratings when 3
raters chose one category and two another

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Chosen by 3 raters |
|---|----|----|----|----|---|--------------------|
| 1 | | 3 | 1 | 9 | 0 | |
| 2 | 1 | | 5 | 6 | 1 | |
| 3 | 2 | 10 | | 43 | 9 | |
| 4 | 19 | 10 | 54 | | 9 | |
| 5 | 1 | 2 | 10 | 10 | | |

A total of 205 statements reached the criterion of agreement by 3 raters but the other two raters agreed on a different category. The most common combination is categories 3 and 4 accounting for a total of 97 statements. This again suggests that the raters are finding the distinction between attitude and emotion (category 4) and expectation (category 3) unclear. Other combinations are much less common. Only one other cell in table 8.4 is over 10; this is the 19 statements placed in category 1 but allocated to category 4 by 2 raters. Since it can be argued that an enduring attitude (category 4) is a feature

of personality (category 1) it is perhaps surprising that this particular combination did not occur more often. Category 5 is not frequently found in combination with other categories. This perhaps reflects the relatively small number of statements which reached the criterion for this category and the greater confusion about its use.

Inter-rater agreement Summary

Investigation of differences between raters for statements which have not reached the criterion for agreement and those which have, together with a category analysis of the statement where agreement is better than criterion, lead to similar conclusions. Category 5 (motivation) seems to be little used partly because of confusion about its meaning and therefore its definition needs clarification. Category 1 (personality) seems to have the most reliable definition even though its very simple, raters seem to share a common conception of the meaning of personality. Category 2 (situation) seems to be used more widely by some raters than others and perhaps needs some more explanation. The greatest confusion seems to be between categories 3 (expectation) and 4 (attitude), these are the most commonly used categories and so perhaps their definitions need modifying in order to emphasise the difference between these two categories.

Theoretical Implications

Given the basic nature of the category definitions, the inter-rater agreement of 81% of statements reaching the criterion of agreement is good and suggests that attributions can indeed be reliably sub-classified. The evidence also suggests that when people are making attributions about a complex real life issue, it is indeed useful to classify their attributions into a wider range of categories than laboratory experiments suggest. Most clients made at least one attribution from each category about either themselves or their partners. No client made only situational or personality attributions.

Each attribution category will now be discussed in turn. The discussion will be based on the 807 attributions which reached the minimum criterion of agreement between raters.

Attitude Attributions

The attitude and feelings attribution category (category 4) was the most common category accounting for 313 of the attributions in the agreed set or 39%. This category is largely ignored in the experimental literature, probably because laboratory experiments largely involve interactions between strangers. In real life, however, the significant daily interactions on an individual are likely to be with people he or she knows well, close friends, relatives and people at work. In these situations emotional attributions - feelings of love or hate, likes and dislikes are going to be more important than in interactions with the bus conductor or shop assistant.

Emotions are often implied from a person's actions. Behaving in certain ways implies love; behaving in other ways implies indifference or hate. In a marriage, exactly which actions are taken to imply love will depend on the expectations of the client. In my experience a common difference between husbands and wives in couples who come for counselling is that husbands believe the appropriate behaviour to show their wives they love them is to provide for them materially. However, the actions the wives see as implying love are less tangible and more to do with listening to them and providing emotional support. If she feels her husband is not providing emotional support she starts to believe he doesn't care about her. Husbands will imply that their wives love them from the fact that their wives cook their meals, wash their clothes and clean the house etc. Since expectations of behaviour play a large part in the attribution of emotions it is not surprising if the raters found it difficult to separate expectation attributions from emotion attributions. Although emotions are often implied from

actions sometimes it is the other way round, the emotion is assumed and taken to be the motivation for the action. For example "He must love me because he brings me bunches of flowers", is implying an emotion from an action but "Because he loves me he brings me bunches of flowers" is using the emotion as a justification for the action. The researcher would consider the second statement as an attribution about motivation, and the first as an attribution about emotion, and therefore put them in different categories. This may be one source of confusion between emotion and motivation attributions. The distinction may not seem important with the example given above but clients will sometimes use a belief in positive emotions to explain away unpleasant behaviour. "Because I love him I stay with him even though he hits me"; they would deny emphatically that this has the same meaning as "I love him because he hits me".

Expectation Attributions

The expectation category (category 3) was the next most common category, accounting for 212 of the attributions or 26%. Investigation of inter-rater differences suggested that this category could be confused with category 4. As explained above, this may be because clients have expectations about the kind of behaviour which implies love or hate or indifference and it may be difficult to separate attributions about the expectation from attributions about the emotion. Another problem is that expectations based on cultural messages are often not verbalised specifically; the client takes them for granted and assumes that others share them. The expectation is only voiced if the partner's behaviour is widely deviant from their particular cultural norm, or if the client finds the norms uncomfortable and thinks of herself as deviant because she is having difficulty conforming to what she feels is expected of her. The raters will also have their own expectations of marital behaviour and may only pick out as expectancy attributions those

expectancies which are clearly at odds with their own. If the raters have different expectancies, then the agreement between them will be lower.

However, the fact that this category was the second most common does suggest that Semin (1980) is right when he suggests that attribution theorists do not take social and cultural expectations sufficiently into account. In the context of explaining their marital problems it seems people do take social and cultural expectations of the roles of husbands and wives into account.

Motivation Attributions

This was the smallest category (category 5) with only 65 of the attributions from the agreed set in this category (8%). This seemed partly to result from difficulties by the raters in using the category rather than simply that it is not very important. Another reason may be that motivation is a very useful concept when attempting to apportion blame. However, it is noticeable in marital counselling that on the whole clients are more interested in finding explanations than apportioning blame. However, clients do take motivation into account sometimes when explaining behaviour. In my experience a woman will often forgive her husband for behaviour which turns out to be unfortunate in its effects if his motives are considered good or honorable. Similarly behaviour which is, in fact, the desired behaviour may be condemned because the partners motives are suspect. Clients use phrases like "He only did it because I nagged him into it". They will even condemn the desired behaviour of returning to the marriage after a separation because it has been done for the wrong reason. "He only came back because she didn't want him any more" or a common condemnation "He/she only came back for the sake of the children". These implied motives can be very important because they will colour the client's attitude to their partner and even their expectations about the partner's

behaviour. Erroneous motivational attributions can wreck communication between the couple, the partner whose motivation has been deduced may see his or her own motives very differently.

This category therefore should not be ignored simply because it is the least used. Improvement of its category definition may also lead to an increase in its use.

Situation & Personality Attributions

These two categories (categories 1 and 2) are being considered together because they are the two most researched categories and on the whole previous researchers have considered them together. Category 1 accounted for 106 attributions (13%) and was the category with the best agreement between the raters. This suggests that the raters shared a common perception of the meaning of personality. Category 2 was used 111 times (14% of the total) and again agreement between the raters was good, although there was some evidence that some raters used the category more widely than others.

However in the case of these categories it is perhaps not so important how often they were used, but how often they were not used. Many researchers define attributions in such a way that they must be either personality or situation. In this research raters were given the opportunity to use a wider range of categories by defining situation and personality independently of each other and offering three other possible categories. The fact that the raters placed only 27% of the total number of attributions into these two categories suggests that personality and situation are not sufficient categories adequately to define statements made when people are free to generate their own explanations for their problems. The fact that the attributor is also an active participator in the events she is describing rather than a passive observer of others probably also influences the need for a greater range of categories. It is easier to remain emotionally

neutral when observing other people's behaviour. When the attributor is emotionally involved in a situation she is likely to want to make attributions about her feelings and the other person's feelings, considering them to be either the cause of the incident she is describing or resulting from it.

Situation versus Disposition Hypothesis

It was hypothesised in chapter 6 that in a marital counselling session a client will make more situational than dispositional attributions about her own behaviour and more dispositional than situational about her partner's. This hypothesis was based on Jones and Nisbett's finding that there is a tendency for actors to explain their own behaviour in terms of the situation they are in and for observers to explain the actors behaviour in terms of his personality. The supporting evidence for this came from laboratory based studies. It is difficult to compare the results of this research with previous studies since the definitions of situation and personality are different. In Jones and Nisbett's study, all attributions were either situation or personality and in this study other categories have been used. Since the male client sample is small (only 4) the hypothesis was tested using data from the 11 female clients. It was decided not to combine the data from the male and female clients in case there was a sex difference in attributional style.

Table 8:5

Situational and Personality Attributions for
Female Clients Coming Alone for Counselling

| | Self | | Partner | |
|--------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| | Personality | Situation | Personality | Situation |
| Mrs. H | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Mrs. F | 6 | 5 | 3 | 0 |
| Mrs. A | 2 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| Mrs. B | 4 | 12 | - | 1 |
| Mrs. E | 4 | 5 | 10 | 2 |
| Mrs. I | 9 | 6 | 5 | 3 |
| Mrs. J | 2 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| Mrs. D | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| Mrs. G | 0 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| Mrs. C | 1 | 6 | 1 | 10 |
| Mrs. X | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 |

The hypothesis was tested using the Wilcoxon test on the self and partner data separately and the difference between the number of situational and personality attributions for self and partner. A one tailed test was used as the hypothesis is directional and has been supported by previous evidence.

Table 8:6

Significance of the Results of the Wilcoxon Test

| Test | Significance |
|--|--------------|
| Self Att's Sit. VS Pers. | Not Sig. |
| Partner Att's Sit. VS Pers. | Not Sig. |
| (Pers - Sit) Self VS (Pers-Sit) Partner | Not Sig. |

These results do not in fact support Jones and Nisbetts hypothesis for either self or partner explanations. Six of the female clients made more situational than personality attributions about themselves compared with four who made more personality attributions than situational. There is therefore a trend in the direction of Jones and Nisbetts prediction but not a significant one. For the partner data the same number of clients made more situational than personality attributions as the other way round.

The lack of significance of these results may simply be due to differences in the method of data collection and analysis, or the inadequacies of the category definitions used in this study. However, it is possible that it is due to differences between the people from whom the data is obtained. Clients are talking about problems which affect them deeply and may have been going on for several years. Many clients by the time they come for counselling are feeling very inadequate and have poor self esteem. Perhaps their feelings of poor self worth make it more likely that they feel personally responsible for the marital problems and so increases the number of explanations in terms of their own personality. Perhaps Jones and Nisbett's hypothesis only applies to situations in which people are giving explanation for events in which they are not so emotionally involved. Certainly laboratory experiments tend not to be highly emotionally charged

situations for the participants. Bains (1985) also suggests that if an individual is interested in changing another's behaviour rather than simply predicting it, situational attributions might be more appropriate. In the marital situation this could mean the optimistic client who feels that there is hope for the future, that her relationship can be improved, may make more situational attributions about her partner than dispositional. The client who feels there is no hope, the situation cannot improve, may make more dispositional than situational attributions about her partner. This may even apply to herself the depressed hopeless feeling client may make more dispositional than situational attributions about herself. Since the client sample in this research contains both women whose relationships were ending and women whose relationships did later improve, this may explain why there were no significant differences between situational and dispositional attributions for either self or partner attributions.

Conclusions

The analysis of clients self and partner attributions suggests that they can indeed be sub-classified into a number of different categories. Although the definitions of the categories need refining to improve reliability, and perhaps the two most frequently used categories in this research need sub-dividing, meaningful categories seem to be disposition, situation, expectation, attitude and motivation. If attitudes, motivations and expectations are important to people when explaining events as well as situational factors and personality, this does suggest that the different attribution theories are not mutually exclusive. Man is not either a scientist or a lawyer, he is sometimes one sometimes the other and sometimes both together. Perhaps attribution theorists who want to do laboratory experiments should include more attribution categories in their research and give

subjects longer more complex and emotionally charged situations to assess. If this were done, it may then be possible to develop more sophisticated hypotheses to test on complex real world data. This research provided no support for the hypothesis that clients would make more dispositional than situational attributions about their partner's behaviour and more situational than dispositional attributions about their own. A number of possible reasons for this were suggested. It is possible that the original hypothesis of Jones and Nisbett on which this hypothesis was based, is only applicable in simple non-emotionally charged situations, and does not take account of all the possible variables influencing attribution making in a complex and emotional situation.

The next chapter analyses the attributional interaction between client and counsellor to investigate the remaining hypothesis that there will be differences between the attributional interaction of clients who continue in counselling and those who do not.

COUNSELLING IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The last chapter examined the client's self and partner attribution statements individually and investigated the hypothesis that their statements could be sub-classified into a number of categories.

It also investigated the hypothesis that in a marital counselling session a client will make more situational than dispositional attributions about her own behaviour and more dispositional than situational about her partner's. This chapter is much more exploratory and speculative in nature. It deals with the remaining hypothesis that there will be a difference between the attribution interactions of clients and counsellors, in a first counselling session, of clients who continue in counselling compared with those who do not. This was felt to be an issue worth exploring because it may lead to some specific suggestions as to how counsellors could improve their counselling technique, or the development of a more specific hypothesis which could be tested on a larger client sample. There can be positive reasons why a client does not return for counselling but on the whole marital problems are complex and have been in existence a long time before the client comes for help; they are therefore unlikely to be resolved in one session. It can therefore be argued that a client's failure to return for a second counselling

session is a failure for the counselling. If this failure is a result of the client-counsellor interaction, then there may be some specific differences between client counsellor interaction for this group of clients and those clients who continue in counselling.

There may also be differences between clients in attribution style and this may have implications for the counselling process. However, since there has been no previous research into differences between people in attribution style it is not possible to develop a specific hypothesis in advance. Another problem is the sample size; since there were only ten female clients who came alone, differences in attribution style between these clients could be due to chance. Any differences therefore can only provide the basis for tentative hypotheses to be tested in greater depth on a larger sample, rather than providing firm conclusions.

The hypotheses tested in the previous chapter concentrated on sub-categorising the clients self and partner attributions. This chapter will not only investigate the hypothesis that there will be differences between the attribution interaction of clients and counsellors in a first counselling session of clients who continue in counselling compared with those who do not, but also look at the clients overall attribution pattern. It will also consider the joint attributions and the attributions about other family members which have so far been ignored.

Attributions about other Family Members

This attribution category was used in the initial analysis if the client seemed to

be attributing some of the responsibility of her marital problems to her parents, or her partner's parents, or her children (either from the current relationship or a previous relationship). This category was in fact rarely used: only 8 clients out of 21 made this type of attribution. So in this sample of clients, on the whole, responsibility for problems was not attributed to other significant family members. This may, however, be an artifact of working in a new town rather than a reflection of a general truth. All three of the clients of the Manchester counsellor mentioned parents as in some way causing the marital problems, but only 5 of 18 Milton Keynes clients mentioned parents or children as a cause of problems. The largest population grouping in Milton Keynes is young couples with young children who have moved into Milton Keynes from elsewhere. These families have usually left their parents behind. Milton Keynes does contain established areas of population but many of the clients from the established areas are also first generation inhabitants of Milton Keynes. Only one client (Mrs B from Milton Keynes) makes more attributions about other family members (her two teenage children) than she does about her partner or herself and her husband jointly. She was the only client in the sample to have children in this age group, the others either had younger children or no children. When the children are young the clients do talk about them, but they are concerned with the effect their relationship is having on the children, they do not seem to see disputes as being caused by the children. If there is a dispute about the children they seem to see it as caused by themselves or their partner rather than caused by the child. In the case of Mrs B the relative numbers of attributions

in the different categories probably accurately reflects the relative importance in her eyes of these factors in her marital problems. Unfortunately, it is not usually that straightforward. In a first counselling session clients will often spend most of their time talking about socially acceptable problems such as difficult teenagers or interfering mother's-in-law. Other problems they feel are caused by relatives which are less socially acceptable will only be mentioned indirectly and briefly to gauge the counsellor's reaction.

Mrs H, for example, made only two attributions about her father's responsibility for the sexual problems in her marriage. (She cannot bear her husband to touch her).

"I think it was due to my father he was a bit strict."

"I think my dad was trying to make me independant because I couldn't get near him if I wanted to give him any affection he used to push me away so I got the feeling it was stupid to show your feelings."

These two statements on their own do not seem too important, but it was clear from the client's manner that there was more behind them than she was prepared to admit at the time. By the third counselling session she was ready to talk about the fact that her father had attempted to assault her sexually as a child, and she believed it was this that had dramatically influenced her attitude to sex. In the first session she was able to identify her father as one of the causes of her problem but she could not bring herself to give the counsellor the full reason until she knew more about how the counsellor was likely to react.

When clients talk about other family members causing their marital problems counsellors will often make judgments about the relative importance of these causes and attempt

to encourage or discourage the clients talking about them as seems appropriate. Therefore, although the absolute number of family attributions in a given counselling session may have no particular significance, how that number changes as the sessions proceed may be useful information for the counsellor. If the counsellor felt, for example, that Mrs B was attributing responsibility for her problems to her children in order to avoid looking at her own and her husband's responsibility she might try to encourage Mrs B to talk less about her children and more about herself and her husband. If she does not succeed and she does not revise her judgment about Mrs B's motives for attributing responsibility to her children she can examine a tape recording of how she is responding to Mrs B. This may show the counsellor that her responses are, in fact, encouraging Mrs B to pursue the issue rather than looking at some other aspect of her problem. The counsellor may be responding to the attribution with a question, for example, and thus encouraging the client to prolong the subject.

Although the absolute number of attributions in a category is not itself significant, the relative proportions of self, partner and joint attributions does seem to have some significance.

Proportions of Self, Partner and Joint Attributions

Counsellors usually work on the premise, that however a client or couple present the problems initially, the balance of responsibility will normally be fairly evenly distributed. They will also look for the source of the problems in the partners' interaction with each other rather than in the personalities of each partner. It could therefore be argued that the more interactive attributions a client makes, the better. She has a more realistic picture of

the dynamics of the relationship than the client who sees the problem in terms of aspects of herself or her partner. However, examination of Table 9.1 shows that the evidence does not seem to support this hypothesis.

Table 9.1 The Proportions of Clients Self, Partner and Joint Attributions for Different Categories of Client

| | <u>Total Client</u> <u>Atts:</u> | <u>Self</u> <u>Atts:</u> | <u>Partner</u> <u>Atts:</u> | <u>Joint</u> <u>Atts:</u> | <u>Clir</u> <u>Atts:</u> |
|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (A) Clients Separated from their partners | | | | | |
| Mrs A | 89 | 26 (29%) | 54 (61%) | 8 (9%) | 4 |
| Mrs I | 72 | 36 (50%) | 26 (36%) | 10 (14%) | 3 |
| Mrs J | 62 | 33 (53%) | 22 (35%) | 7 (11%) | 1 |
| (B) Female Clients living with their partners who came once only | | | | | |
| Mrs D | 69 | 22 (32%) | 29 (42%) | 17 (25%) | 9 |
| Mrs E | 124 | 55 (44%) | 50 (40%) | 19 (15%) | 15 |
| Mrs G | 42 | 17 (40%) | 14 (33%) | 11 (26%) | 16 |
| (C) Female Clients living with their partners who came more than once | | | | | |
| Mrs C | 124 | 42 (34%) | 61 (49%) | 21 (17%) | 28 |
| Mrs B | 55 | 28 (51%) | 8 (15%) | 6 (11%) | 7 |
| Mrs F | 78 | 39 (50%) | 21 (27%) | 18 (23%) | 16 |
| Mrs H | 24 | 15 (63%) | 3 (13%) | 4 (17%) | 7 |
| (D) Male Clients living with their partners who came more than once | | | | | |
| Mr M | 50 | 36 (72%) | 7 (14%) | 7 (14%) | 5 |
| Mr N | 64 | 42 (66%) | 12 (19%) | 10 (16%) | 8 |
| Mr K | 65 | 22 (34%) | 35 (54%) | 8 (12%) | 17 |
| Mr L | 56 | 30 (54%) | 21 (38%) | 5 (9%) | 4 |
| (E) Couples | | | | | |
| Mr P) | 27 | 19 (70%) | 5 (19%) | 3 (11%) | 15 |
| Mrs P) | 37 | 12 (32%) | 22 (59%) | 3 (8%) | |
| Mr O) | 25 | 25 (100%) | - | - | 15 |
| Mrs O) | 32 | 19 (59%) | 6 (19%) | 5 (16%) | |
| (F) Clients of the other counsellor | | | | | |
| Mr X | 33 | 17 (52%) | 12 (36%) | 1 (3%) | 29 |
| Mrs X | 13 | 9 (69%) | 1 (8%) | 2 (15%) | |
| Mrs Y | 47 | 25 (53%) | 13 (28%) | 8 (17%) | 23 |

The two clients with the highest percentage of joint attributions (Mrs D and Mrs G) are also two of the three who did not return after the first counselling session. Even when clients come with their partner the percentage of joint attributions does not seem to increase, although it might be assumed that the act of coming together implies that they see their problems as being shared. It seems, then, that the higher the percentage of joint attributions made by clients, the greater the risk that they will not come more than once. Looking at the joint attributions made suggests some reasons why this might be.

Mrs I

"We both have very strong characters both voice our own opinions."

Mr N

"We never seem to sit down and manage to talk."

Mrs G

"We always do things together."

All of these attributions are very "factual" in their content these clients make no attempts to explain why these events are occurring. They are therefore using joint attributions to express aspects of the relationship which to them seem unchangeable.

Another use of joint attributions is exemplified by

Mrs D.

"If I was to stop doing anything altogether other than running the home, then rows would stop altogether for a time."

Mrs D does have insight into a cause of the rows but for her the solution is unacceptable therefore she can see no way of avoiding this interaction.

Clients therefore seem in general to be using joint attributions for those aspects of their relationship, they

see no possibility of changing.

One other feature which seems to separate clients who come only once from clients who continue in counselling seems to be the number of self attributions. Table 8.1 shows that all three clients who came only once made less than 50% of their attributions about their own contributions to the marital problem. Of the remaining 18 individual clients or couples only 4 make less than 50% of their attributions about their own part in the relationship. When clients come alone this is perhaps not surprising; the client who sees the problems in terms of what their partner has done is less likely to see the need for continued counselling for themselves. Indeed, some clients come hoping that the counsellor will somehow be able to persuade or force their partners to come so that they can be told they are in the wrong.

Self and Partner Attribution Category Differences:

If clients who do not return for later counselling sessions have a tendency to make fewer self attributions and more partner or joint attributions, perhaps there are differences in the attribution categories they use for self and partner attributions.

Table 9:2

Self and Partner Attribution Categories
for Different Groups of clients

| | SELF | | | | | PARTNER | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|----------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Separated Clients | 13 16% | 13 16% | 20 24% | 29 35% | 8 10% | 11 13% | 10 11% | 22 25% | 41 47% | 3 3% |
| One Visit | 6 8% | 8 11% | 25 33% | 25 33% | 12 16% | 14 17% | 11 13% | 9 11% | 41 49% | 8 10% |
| More than One visit | 12 12% | 25 24% | 26 25% | 33 32% | 7 7% | 5 7% | 11 16% | 19 27% | 31 44% | 4 6% |
| Male clients | 14 14% | 12 12% | 28 27% | 38 37% | 10 10% | 11 19% | 12 20% | 10 17% | 22 37% | 4 7% |
| Totals for all clients | 61 13% | 62 13% | 130 28% | 164 36% | 44 10% | 45 13% | 49 14% | 82 24% | 150 43% | 21 6% |

Table 9.2 shows that over all clients the proportions of category 1 and 2 attributions are almost identical. Clients however make a slightly lower percentage of their self attributions in category 4 compared to their partner attributions. For categories 3 and 5 however the percentage of self attributions is higher than partner attributions. One figure which seems to be different from the overall totals is the percentage of self category 2 attributions (situation) for the clients who are living with their partners and attend more than once for counselling, (24% compared to 14% for the overall total). This is an interesting figure since it seems to suggest that if clients can see their own problems in terms of situational factors they are more likely to return for counselling. The clients who came only once made relatively few self personality attributions (8% compared to 13%) and relatively more self motivational attributions (16% compared to 10%). Perhaps this reflects their ambivalence about whether they want counselling. Clients who were separated and the male clients had percentages of self attributions very similar to the overall totals.

Separated clients however make relatively few partner motivational attributions (3% compared with 5%). Male clients seem to make fewer expectation attributions about their partner (17% compared to 24%) and more personality and situation attributions (19% & 20% respectively compared to 13% and 14%). Female clients who came more than once made a smaller percentage of partner personality attributions (7% compared to 13%). Whilst female clients who came once only made far fewer expectation attributions about their partner (11% compared to 24%). This could suggest that they have learnt that they can expect little from their partner and perhaps this contributes to a feeling that counselling is a waste of time. Alternatively it may be that this group of clients has always had fewer expectations of what others will do for them and this could include the counsellor.

It seems therefore that there are differences in the attribution categories that different groups of client use and these may be worth pursuing in greater detail in future research. It may be possible to show that counsellors need to learn to encourage clients to make certain types of attribution in order to help them resolve their problems. It is worth investigating the counsellors' attributions in more detail to see if the nature of the counsellors attributions makes a difference to whether the clients return or not.

Counsellor Attributions

It can, firstly, be seen from Table 9.1 that the three female clients whose partners have left or who are on the point of leaving receive fewer attributions from the counsellor than any other group of clients, the maximum being 4 and the minimum for any other client being 7. This perhaps lends

support to the counsellors subjective impression that the needs of clients whose marriage has broken down against their wishes are rather different initially from the needs of clients who are attempting to improve the relationship or thinking about ending it themselves. Clients whose marriages are ending because their partners are leaving seem to be more in need of support and a shoulder to cry on at the beginning of counselling. They may not be ready to look at their own contribution to the break up of the relationship in any depth and they believe they know what their partners contribution is because he is being the active one. It is not surprising, then, if during a first session with these clients the counsellor offers few alternative insights into the marital problem. The clients will continue to come for counselling despite receiving few new insights because their needs at that stage are primarily for support. In Milton Keynes few women in this position will have their parents or other close relative nearby to provide emotional support. Tapes of later sessions with these clients may show that the counsellor slowly increases the number of attributions she makes.

The counsellor on the whole seems to be most active when the clients make relatively few self attributions. This is even true of the three separated clients; the counsellor makes most attributions (4) to Mrs A, who makes only 29% of her attributions about herself. Mrs C is the female client who remains in counselling but makes fewer than 50% self attributions; in this case the counsellor makes 28 attributions, the highest total in 16 first interviews recorded. Similarly Mr K is the male client with the lowest percentage of self attributions (34%) and the counsellor

makes 17 attributions (double the number made to any other male client). The number of attributions from the counsellor is also high for 2 of the 3 women who came only once. It seems then that when the client makes relatively few self attributions, the counsellor is most active offering alternative explanations. A possible reason for this is that the counsellor needs to try harder to convince the client of the benefit of further counselling for herself when she sees her husband as largely responsible for the marital problems. It does occasionally happen that client and counsellor mutually agree at the end of the first session that there is no need for the client to return. This however happens only rarely; most client's marital problems, by the time they have made the decision to seek outside help are too complex to be significantly improved in a one hour session. Coming to more sessions does not guarantee that the counsellor will be able to help clients improve their relationships (or help them part amicably), but returning for a second session at least shows the client has been convinced that her situation can be altered in some way. Perhaps the counsellor is more active when the client makes fewer self attributions because she is trying to redress the balance - attempting to convince the client that there are things she herself can do to change the situation. If this is the case the counsellor will make more attributions about the client's role in the marital problems than about her partners role. When the client does see herself as largely responsible for the couple's problems, perhaps in this case, the counsellor is trying to help her see that her husband shares the responsibility and so the counsellor makes more attributions about the husband's role in the

marital difficulties. Table 9.3 gives the numbers of "husband" and "wife" attributions made by the counsellor.

Table 9.3 The Number of "Wife" and "Husband" Attributions made by the Counsellor to each client

| Female Clients | | "Wife" Attributions | "Husband" Attributions |
|---------------------------------|-------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Less than 50% self attributions | Mrs D | 1 | 5 |
| | Mrs E | 3 | 8 |
| | Mrs G | 3 | 7 |
| | Mrs A | 1 | 3 |
| | Mrs C | 5 | 19 |
| Totals | | 13 | 42 |
| More than 50% self attributions | Mrs F | 3 | 3 |
| | Mrs H | 6 | - |
| | Mrs I | 3 | - |
| | Mrs J | - | 1 |
| | Mrs B | 2 | 4 |
| Totals | | 14 | 8 |
| Male Clients | | | |
| Less than 50% self attributions | Mr K | 13 | 2 |
| Totals | | 13 | 2 |
| More than 50% self attributions | Mr N | 4 | 4 |
| | Mr L | 4 | - |
| | Mr M | - | 5 |
| Totals | | 8 | 9 |

Inspection of the figures shows that there is no evidence that the counsellor is trying to redress the balance by making more "wife" attributions when the client makes more "husband" attributions or vice versa, although a chi-square test on the total "husband" and "wife" attributions for the two groups of female clients shows there is a significant difference ($p < 0.001$) between the two groups. The male client sample is smaller but there is still a significant difference in the number of "husband" and "wife" attributions made by the counsellor/^{for}the two groups of clients ($p < 0.02$). For the female clients this significant difference is a result of the counsellor making more "husband" attributions when the client also makes more "husband" attributions ; the number of "wife" attributions made by the counsellor is similar whether or not the client makes more than 50% or less than 50% self attributions. When the client is male the counsellor makes similar number of "husband" attributions irrespective of the number of self attributions the client makes, again it is when the client makes more attributions about his partner that the counsellor follows a similar pattern and in this case makes more "wife" attributions. The counsellor is not then redressing the balance in the attribution pattern when she makes her own attributions, to find out what she might be doing requires an examination of some of the attributions the counsellor has made.

The following three quotes are husband attributions made by the counsellor to three different clients (Mrs D, Mrs E and Mrs C respectively) who all made more husband attributions.

1. "Perhaps he sees the money debts though as getting at him."

2. "It doesn't sound like he feels very needed."
3. "It sounds like he actually doesn't think that he is very adequate and he worries just as much as you do about how he is going to perform and then he gets angry and frustrated and he cannot sit down and say I'm worried so he has to say well it's all your fault and he ends up hitting you."

The first two of these quotes, although they are about the husbands, also imply something about the clients - that she is trying to annoy him by getting into debt and in the other case that her behaviour is causing her husband to feel unwanted. In other words the impact of these attributions, by re-interpreting the husband's behaviour, is to make him less responsible and the wife more responsible. The third one is slightly different; it is reinterpreting the husband's behaviour by suggesting that may be he does not feel sexually adequate, but it does not increase her responsibility for the problems. Mrs C returned for counselling, ^{while} Mrs D and Mrs E did not, suggesting perhaps that when ^a client sees her problems in terms of her partner rather than herself it is a mistake for the counsellor to make attributions reducing his responsibility for the problem if they, by implication, strongly increase her responsibility. The client probably perceives the counsellor as blaming her or being on her husband's side. If she sees the counsellor as unsympathetic she is not likely to want to come back and talk to her again.

However, counsellors do not see their function as providing uncritical support for the client's point of view. In order to change her situation the client needs to be able to see her own role in creating the situation; if she is unable or unwilling to do this, more counselling sessions are not likely to be of benefit to her. In the first counselling

session then, when the client is attributing most of the responsibility for her problems to her husband, the counsellor needs to strike a balance between being supportive and sympathetic so that the client will want to return and challenging her perception to test out whether she really wants to resolve her problems herself. However, diplomatic the counsellor was, Mrs D and Mrs E may not have returned for more counselling, since they may have been looking for uncritical support of their perceptions of their marital problems.

An example of a "husband" attribution made to a client who makes more self attributions (Mrs B) is - "It sounds like he cannot win then if he doesn't do it you want him to because you are worried and if he does do it you are worried whether he is doing it properly."

This attribution is suggesting very directly to the client that she has put her husband in an impossible situation, i.e. it is increasing her responsibility for their problems when she already sees herself as largely responsible. Mrs B did return for counselling suggesting that apparently confirming the clients own view that she is responsible for her marital problems does not deter her from returning for more counselling.

In some cases, however, when the client is making more self attribution, the counsellor's "wife" attributions reduce the client's responsibility for her problems - for example (an attribution to Mrs H) "so you were brought up to feel that nice women don't enjoy sex".

This attribution reduces the clients "blame" for the problem without pushing the "blame" on to her husband, her parents are seen as contributing to her feelings.

However, looking at the counsellor's attributions on their

own does not take into account the clients reactions to her counsellor's suggestions. These give important information about how receptive the client is to seeing her problems from a different perspective. The next section, therefore, investigates this interaction process. How does the client respond to the counsellors attributions and how does the counsellor react to that response?

Client Counsellor Interaction

When the transcripts were examined in detail there seemed to be seven basic strategies used by clients to respond to attributions suggested to them by the counsellor. Four of these strategies lead to the subject of that attribution being dropped at least temporarily by the counsellor, and so they have been called blocking strategies. Although this name has been used it does not imply that the client is deliberately blocking the counsellor to avoid a subject. Some possible reasons why blocks occur will be discussed after detailed examples of the blocking strategies. The other three strategies lead to the attribution made by the counsellor being pursued by the client and the counsellor and so they have been called positive responses. Detailed examples of these will be given after the blocking strategies have been discussed.

Blocking Strategies

1. Positive Block

The client agrees with the point made by the counsellor but in such a terse way that pursuing the point seems difficult, e.g.

(a) "It doesn't sound like he feels needed"

Response: "He doesn't."

In some cases the counsellor persists, and continues to pursue the subject even though the client's answer has been terse or monosyllabic. The client, after all, appears to be co-

operative; she has agreed with the point raised by the counsellor, e.g.

(b) "In the long term that's going to do your relationship a lot of harm."

"That's right."

"If you're going to get back together it needs to be ignoring the childrens needs ~~it~~ needs to be because you two need it."

"That's right."

"If he comes back to you because you've blackmailed him about the children, that's going to breed a lot of hate and resentment."

"Yes"

The counsellor then gave up and changed the subject.

(c) "So you were brought up to feel that nice women didn't enjoy sex."

"Yes"

"Does that mean that you haven't had an orgasm?"

"Well I don't really know."

"You just feel you have missed out somewhere on something. What is the rest of your relationship like apart from sex?"

In this case the counsellor has made two attempts to find out more about the client's sexual difficulties, it produces very little response from the client and so the counsellor changes the subject.

These responses have been classified as blocking strategies even though the counsellor does quite often persist as in the two examples above. There are three reasons for this. First, the client could in fact say a lot more than she does about the issue raised; in all of the examples above the client could have said much more if she chose. There is also sometimes a suspicion that the client does not in fact really agree whole heartedly with the counsellor but she says she

does in order to prevent the topic being discussed further. (The first extended example is a good illustration of this, the dialogue quoted comes near the end of a session in which the client had produced plenty of evidence to suggest that she was deliberately trying to arouse her husband's guilt about his children in order to get him to return.) The final reason for suggesting that agreement can be a blocking strategy comes from the fact that when extended dialogues between client and counsellor on a topic do occur the commonest reason for the dialogue to come to an end is the client making a terse accepting response to the counsellor. This will be considered in greater detail when extended dialogues are discussed later on in this chapter. Therefore, although this is a blocking strategy its use does not always mean that the client has not accepted anything the counsellor says to her.

2. Negative Block

This is a firm disagreement with the point made, and it is the most effective blocking strategy; the counsellor does not often attempt to pursue the topic although she may come back to it later on in the session, e.g.

(a) "It's not something to with work perhaps."

Response: "No I don't think so, nothing at work, he likes his job, he likes it."

(b) "So may be from her point of view the marriage felt like you saying oh well I might as well rather than yes I really want that."

Response: "No I don't towards the end no she knew how I felt strongly for her we was just inseparable really etc."

In fact this response strategy was rarely used, the clients did not often openly disagree with the counsellor. There are many possible reasons for this. Perhaps the counsellor

tries to ensure that she does not suggest attributions that she feels would be unacceptable to the client. The client may regard the counsellor as the expert and therefore feels she cannot openly reject any suggestions the counsellor makes, or she may be frightened that the counsellor will reject her as unco-operative if she rejects suggestions put to her, particularly in a first counselling session.

3. The "Yes But" Response

The client accepts the point put to her but immediately raises an objection, e.g.

(a) "As soon as you make yourself attractive you are actually putting pressure on him to perform."

Response: "Yes but if I don't make myself attractive he says I'm not bothering anyway so what do you do."

(b) "So she is perhaps quite lonely?"

Response: "I've suggested we go out but she doesn't want to go out etc."

This again is not a very common response strategy.

4. Change the Subject.

The client either makes no comment at all about the counsellors attribution or only makes a very brief one and then she changes the subject, e.g.

(a) "That sounds like you feel they don't care about you and they feel you don't care about them."

Response: "Yes whether it would help if my husband went to see someone and told his side of the story."

(b) "Perhaps the reason she is a bit wary about coming somewhere is that she feels to blame and she is going to get told off."

Response: "I think you see I must be honest with her and tell her I have come here."

(c) "In a way the tests are saying its your fault (the husband's) if they found nothing wrong with you."

Response: "Yes you know the consultant said it doesn't mean to say you cannot have a child but it's 10 years now we have been married and I think you know to help him if I could have artificial insemination and something happened it might make a difference I'm hoping."

This is a more subtle example of subject-change by the client. She has kept with the topic of their childlessness but she has not really responded to the counsellor's specific point about her husband's possible feelings that he is to blame. She changes the subject to artificial insemination without making it clear whether she means from her husband or a donor, and the counsellor falls into the trap of asking her to clarify what she means. When the subject is changed in a subtle way the counsellor is often not aware of it at the time. Listening to a tape recording of the session can help the counsellor see where she has been lead away from a subject without realising it.

All of these response styles have been classed as blocking strategies because they lead to the counsellor dropping a suggestion she has made - usually straight away although in the case of the positive block she may have one or two more tries to represent the point. This does not mean the client is being deliberately unco-operative. For example in the last example given the client may not have been aware that her answer is ambiguous; she is clear what is happening and she may believe she has made it clear to the counsellor. The counsellor may also present her point in a way that makes a blocking response more likely. For example, "Because she actually settled down very quickly didn't she I mean she may have had boyfriends before you but she was

still very young when she got married and exceptionally young for having her first child."

Response: "Yes."

This attribution is so detailed that there is very little else that the client can do but agree, whatever he actually feels, and there is not much left for him to add if he is not very articulate - which he was not. The counsellor has not left herself much else to say on the point either, so she has made it very difficult for herself to pursue it any further. If the attribution had been worded differently it may have enabled the client to say a little more about how young she seemed to him when they got married. The client may of course when she uses a positive block be in effect saying "this is nothing new to me, I have thought of this point for myself"; if this is the case then there is probably no point in the counsellor pursuing the issue. Similarly a "no" answer may mean only what it says - on this occasion the counsellors attribution really is not relevant. The client sample from the other counsellor is not large enough to say whether these blocking strategies are effective only against the researcher or whether they would apply to other counsellors. However, it is likely that there are, for every counsellor, methods of responding by her clients which lead to her failing to pursue a topic she has introduced. It is important for counsellors to be aware of these methods because once the client gets to know her counsellor better she can deliberately answer her in such a way that the counsellor drops the point. In this way the client can evade painful subjects and outwit her counsellor. Although effective blocking strategies may be different from counsellor to counsellor there are, in fact, universal social responses which mean that the person making them does not

want to say any more. The responses "I'm fine" or "Very well thank you" to the question "How are you" do not necessarily mean the person is fine or very well, simply that they are being polite and they do not want to say any more, and the questioner knows that. It is therefore possible that blocking strategies are learnt responses that are common to most people.

Blocking strategies used by couples in counselling have not been investigated because there are too few transcripts and the subject is much more complex since the clients can talk to each other as well as the counsellor. Clients can also block a painful subject to protect their partners rather than themselves.

Positive Responses

There are 3 response strategies which seem to lead to dialogue between client and counsellor on a particular topic. They also provide evidence that the counsellors alternative attributions are sometimes at least accepted by the client and perhaps incorporated into her way of seeing the problem.

1. Acceptance with amplification

This differs from the positive blocking strategy because the client does not just accept the counsellor's point with a "Yes" or a terse sentence; she elaborates in some way on the counsellor's suggestion, usually by giving a corroborating example, e.g.

(a) "Perhaps its the responsibility he cannot take."

Response: "Oh I think that's part of it. He says he doesn't know whether he was too young to take on a mortgage to take on the responsibility of a wife and family etc."

(b) e.g. "Perhaps by it she means she feels she gives more to you than you give to her?"

Response: "It's possible she said I never have loved

her I mean I feel as though she has put me in an awkward situation, because if I try to give her more I suppose it's that in a way I'm totally giving up my life. If I do that I have to give up everything."

2. Direct Response

The client makes a comment on the attribution raised by the counsellor which is not a straightforward acceptance, nor is it a rejection. The client shows in some way that she is interested in the point put to her by the counsellor, e.g.

(a) "That's a way of keeping your independence isn't it or perhaps it's because that is what you would like to do to your dad."

Response: "I haven't thought of it like that before."

(b) "That's why you don't have a very high opinion of yourself, you do believe it's your fault, and all the things I'm saying to you, you look at as if I'm confirming that as if I'm blaming you. Well the way I can help you is to let you talk and to try and boost your self confidence a bit, so that you are able to go and do what it is you want to do with your life."

Response: "But should I do that?"

3. Respond to only part of the point raised

This usually happens when the counsellor makes a rather long and complicated attribution, or occasionally she strings two ideas together/^{deliberately} to see which one the client will find most acceptable.

e.g. "It sounds like that in the short term if you want to keep him you have to work at improving the relationship so that he wants to stay, well he says he does want to stay and obviously that's a 2-way thing, it's not just you that needs to put in all the effort he needs to do something as well."

Response: "Well, I think he has made more of an effort, certainly in the last few weeks."

The client has made no comment about the effort she is prepared to put into the relationship, only about the effort she sees her husband making. All of these response strategies lead to the counsellor making a further comment relevant to her original attribution, to which the client then responds again.

The difference between the first interview sessions of the three women who did not return for a second session and the first interviews of the four women still living with their husbands who did return, is that all of the clients who returned entered into an extended dialogue with the counsellor about at least one of the attributions raised by the counsellor,^{but} none of the women who did not return did enter into an extended dialogue with the counsellor. (An extended dialogue is seen as one that consists of a minimum of counsellors attribution, response from client, response to client from the counsellor, and client's response to the counsellor's response, staying with the idea presented in the initial attribution.) When the transcripts of the four male clients were examined, all of them also entered into at least one extended dialogue with the counsellor, and all of them returned for the second session.

Extended Dialogues

Since extended dialogues between client and counsellor seem to be a critical part of a successful first counselling session, (if success is measured in terms of creating a desire in the client to come for more counselling), it is worth examining in detail at least one example from each transcript.

Mrs H

"It sounds like you see being independent as not being close to somebody not cuddling them and touching them."

Counsellor
Attribution

"Subconsciously perhaps yes."

Positive
Block

"May be that's why you don't want your husband to touch you, you feel you might lose your independence."

Counsellor
Attribution

"I don't think so because we used to get on alright."

Negative
Block

"Were you less affectionate though before he stopped coming home."

Counsellor
Presses point

"May be I was yes."

Positive Block

"Perhaps you had associated independence with that and he came home to find you could do everything and you didn't even seem to need him to touch you to cuddle you."

Counsellor
Repeats her
point.

"It seems to make me feel better if I can put him down in some way."

Client changes
subject

"That's a way of keeping your independence isn't it, or perhaps it's because that is what you would like to do ^{to} your dad."

Counsellor
tries new
attribution.

"I haven't thought of it like that before."

Direct response

"What sort of things would you like to say to your dad, if I were to say to you pretend he is sitting there in that chair, and instead of getting up and walking out you were to tell him what you felt about him. What would you say?"

Counsellor
continues
point

I would say that he was cold, unfeeling, pig-headed."

Direct
Response

"That sounds quite a lot do you think it would

make you feel better to say those things to him?" Counsellor continues the point

"It would"

Positive
Block

This extract starts at a point before the extended dialogue takes place because immediately before it the counsellor makes two successive attempts to convince the client that for her there may be a link between being independent and not showing affection. The client blocks these attempts firstly with a positive block and then when the counsellor persists with a negative block, and finally when the counsellor tries yet again the client changes the subject. The counsellor responds at first with the same point but also adds another attribution about the client's father. It is this attribution that leads to a genuine extended dialogue between the client and counsellor with the client showing in the way that she responds that the counsellor has given her a new insight. She finally responds with a positive block and the counsellor then changes the subject. This is the client whose father had attempted to sexually assault her. She found talking about her problems extremely difficult and all of her contributions are brief. In this dialogue the client has made her own attribution about an aspect of the marital problem and the counsellor has responded with a plausible explanation about why the client should behave in this way based on what she has already said about herself earlier in the session. The client is interested perhaps because it is an explanation which reduces her own guilt.

Mrs B

"I think well what do I do, do I say to my husband, well I cannot do it any more, you have got to do it, is that very fair, when I have always done it, I mean is that very fair to just say, oh well I cannot cope with any of the finances

anymore you have got to do it all, do you think that would be a fair thing to do, when he has not actually taken a hand and always done it."

"Well if that's how you really feel?"

"You think that he should do it anyway?"

"Well at the moment he is obviously content to let you do it and you always have done it, perhaps you have never clearly said to him I don't want to do it any more."

Counsellors
Attribution

"Well I have, when we sat down and I tried to talk to him about it I said to him you do it and he just laughs at me and he comes out with an expression like oh well you like doing all the finances it gives you something to worry about, but I don't like doing it, it's just that if I didn't do it what would happen and if I say I said to him you have got to do it, otherwise I shall land up in a mental home or I shall do something stupid, you have got to do it there are no two ways about it, and things got into such a state, we got into such a state that we actually did lose our house, then that would break our marriage up properly, to get to that stage where things got in such a state that nothing was paid on time."

Direct
Response

"So are you going to worry anyway?"

Counsellors
Comment

"I would worry anyway!"

Confirmation

"It sounds like he cannot win then if he doesn't do it if you want him to because you are worried and if he does do it you are worried whether he is doing it properly?"

Modified
Attribution

"Yes, yes I ought to just say to him well you try, not got to you try to do it and see how you cope

doing it for say 6 months until I am well enough to cope with everything again in my mind you know, I mean he knows I am on sleeping tablets for no reason at all. There's a problem there that causes you not to sleep and normally the doctor says to me if you don't get sleep and that it just leads to a nervous breakdown altogether and then they would have to rally round because I wouldn't be able to cope with anything then, if I got to such a stage where I had to give up work because I was a nervous wreck, but I am not that sort of person I don't sit shaking or anything like that you know I am quite sensible, I am sensible enough to know that there is something wrong I have got to do something about it before things start going radically wrong and I would do something to myself or I just walk out and then what would happen, what would I do I could never you know, I couldn't really just go back all I'd get then would be, oh you walked out on us you didn't care about us, you couldn't care less about us, you just walked out, and I probably have that then with everything else they'd be telling me everytime anything went wrong they'd be saying to me well you didn't care about us when you just walked out I took the overdose that was one thing that was said oh well you weren't worried about us when you took the overdose, well who was worrying about me, you know."

Acceptance
and amplification
followed
by subject
change

The length of this extract shows the contrast between the

previous client and this one - she is much more verbose. There are two interlinked themes in this client's description of her problems, she has two teenage children both at work and she and her husband also work full time. She feels that her husband and children do not care enough about her, nor do they help her enough in a practical way with household tasks and money management. The counsellor makes several attempts to make attributions about the family's lack of care, but she backs away from these, usually by changing the subject back to the practical issues. In this extract the counsellor's response is taken up enthusiastically to a question she asks about control of the finances. This leads the counsellor to make an attribution about why her husband may not be helping her. She makes a direct response to the attribution which is in effect a denial, but it enables the counsellor to comment further. The client confirms the counsellor's comment; this enables the counsellor to modify her attribution about the finances. This modified attribution is then accepted by the client, who then changes the subject back to the sleeping tablets she is taking. This extract has been chosen to show that it is not in fact necessary for the client to agree totally with the counsellor's initial attribution for a meaningful dialogue to take place. The counsellor does not have to be totally accurate the first time; if the client is keen to resolve her problems she can actively participate in the attributional process. Once the attribution seems correct to her she is then able to change the subject back to the issue of, ^{whether} / her family care about her.

Mrs F

"Well it sounds in a way like you are testing each

other out at the moment. Things went bad at the time when you got pregnant, really bad and they haven't improved since because the whole of that episode got swept under the carpet and not really resolved and now you have found out that he is having an affair and thats triggered you off into talking to each other again."

Counsellor
Attribution

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"Well the funny thing is as well you see ever since the abortion he has said to me there hasn't been a day gone by when one of us hasn't, well perhaps there has been the odd weekend where we have been alright but there have been times when I have shouted I'm going to get a divorce, I'm the one whose started, I'm not living like this, I'm going to get a divorce but I thought seriously about it but didn't want to take it because I think it's a final step and thought if you do that I couldn't go back, I'm very and I think Andy's like that, we are both very definite people, well we are not really otherwise we shouldn't be shilly shallying but we both think that we are very definite. I thought that once I had been to see a solicitor and put the wheels in motion he wouldn't back down, I wouldn't back down but that would be it we would be divorced within 6 months if your both agreeable or whatever, and that was one thing, and oh there been a? he said to me he said oh we're not getting on I shall probably end up leaving you or I shall probably end up well get a divorce, but now when I actually say to him

Client
Attributions

look seriously in all seriousness if you want a divorce if you want to leave me, no I'm not going to, I think the worse thing a woman can do is beg somebody to stay especially if they don't want to, and I think now, I've actually said to him if you want a divorce go he says he doesn't want one, and I cannot understand that either unless this is something that you find."

Client
Attributions

"Well you have been testing each other out all the time haven't you, you have been saying I think I will get a divorce it's not very good is a way to see how he responds."

Counsellor
repeats
attribution

"He's just said you go and do it if thats what you want you know usually....."

" Yes, so if you have called each others bluff and you have each backed down but now its no longer bluff there's a real..."

"Triangle sort of thing? "

"Yes, and so you have both got to be serious about it and make a concrete decision, do we want this relationship, do we keep it going or do we end it. You cannot bluff each other anymore, and for that reason alone he cannot really give up the affair at the moment because that's his reason for confronting the issue."

Counsellor
modifies
attribution

"Really I think that explains why he has said yes

instead of just saying oh no and giving me a pat on the head and things etc." Acceptance and
lengthy
amplification

This client is trying to understand why her husband having an affair seems to be bringing them closer when she feels it should be driving them even farther apart since the relationship has been in a shaky state for a couple of years. When the counsellor first makes her attribution the client, at first, does not seem to be responding to it but she ends by, in fact, producing some supporting evidence. The counsellor responds by repeating her attribution incorporating this evidence. The client, in the end, comes as close as she ever does to formally accepting the counsellor's point by admitting that the counsellor's attribution might explain why he admitted he was having an affair instead of denying it. She then continues to explain the circumstances which lead her to challenge him. Counselling this client was a very frustrating experience because it was hard to keep her to any particular point, she was very skilled in changing the subject without really appearing to. She would produce corroborating evidence to an attribution suggested by the counsellor, but would seldom acknowledge that that was that she was doing.

Mrs C

"Yet I still feel towards him, you know, if he comes home at lunch time, I still want to make love to him, but I feel I can't. I start off to, you know, and he says 'Oh, it's no good' and he will get off and he will say 'It's no good, you're too dry - a waste of bloody time and he will just put his clothes on and go back to work, I mean that isn't... I just don't understand, perhaps I don't want to understand."

"Well perhaps what/^{he}is saying is I cannot when he says it's no good he probably means himself." Counsellors Attribution

"Yes, it was like it wasn't last night it must have been the night before when we made love, like it was OK when I was on top of him and he said 'Oh you have had what you wanted' and I said "well you can have pleasures from me, I know you like making love on top of me or at the back of me you know", he says "no it's no good now you know it was no good, he was just limp, when I tried to arouse him he said "oh you are wasting your time" and he just turned over and went to sleep or made out he went to sleep." Acceptance and amplification

"So he just goes limp without actually having an orgasm." Confirming question

"Yes, I know people say, I mean I don't discuss my sex life with anybody but my one close friend and she says to me "well perhaps he feels like he cannot make love to you properly, he just feels let down to himself so he just brings himself off and that's it and thinks about the next day, you know puts it to the back of his mind because he doesn't want to row and argue no more because he said like Christmas time he kept saying how sorry he was, but it don't mean nothing because I know in a few weeks time it will all start again which it did. I mean I don't want to split up I want to stay with him, but I cannot live like this. I feel like its just a hotel he comes and goes when he wants to, he hasn't got a drink problem he can stay away from the pub, it's not that he's an alcoholic but he just goes out. He says he's bored indoors Further - amplification by client

he cannot stay indoors with me, it's too boring because I get so dry, and I said to him, I only get so dry because it's at the back of my head all the time about all the rows and the hitting, it's humiliating, is that the word, he's told me so many times it's just a waste of time and I'm no bloody good and all this. that and the other and 4 letter words I mean, how are you supposed to feel good toward somebody when they talk and treat you like that. I mean this morning I thought, Oh, I will get the childrens clothes and I will go and live with my mum for a couple of days, but it doesn't solve the problem because you have still got to come back and face it all again."

Further
amplification
by client

"Well it sounds like he says all those things because he doesn't feel good about himself but he cannot say that; it's easier to blame you, it's easier to say you're useless than to look at the fact that may be he isn't much good either."

Counsellor
rephrases
attribution

As this extract suggests, this client had a very severe marital problem. She feels she cannot feel sexual towards her husband because she is frightened of being hit. She thinks this is a reasonable attitude on her part but she also feels a failure and guilty as if it is somehow her fault that he hits her. She has no insight at all into what he might feel about his sexuality; she assumes he feels O.K and accepts at face value his explanation that the problem is entirely due to her lack of lubrication. The counsellor suspects that he may well be feeling very inadequate, and this might explain his behaviour. The client's remark at the beginning of this extract gives the counsellor the opportunity to suggest this.

She then produces some direct corroborating evidence that is in fact new to the counsellor. The counsellor makes a comment to confirm that she has understood correctly; the client then produces some more corroborating evidence. The counsellor repeats the attribution incorporating the evidence. This client is the one with whom the counsellor is the most active making more attributions than in any other first session.

Mr N

"This very good friend of mine, John, came up one night and in fact I can only put it that we got totally sozzled really the 3 of us and we played strip draughts now we all ended up in the same bed that night but nothing sexual happened as far as I'm aware. Alright this preyed on Sheena's mind this was near enough November 4th we literally just got drunk, I don't know what John I think said oh lets play strip draughts or something. Oh fine bit of a joke but when we carried on drinking it got serious now Sheena was saying what I made her do and I was saying no I didn't make her do it we were all drunk alright it was to some extent circumstantial but I said if she was so totally against it drink or not she wouldn't have let us she wouldn't have participated. I've always said she has got a soft spot for John I'm not saying she indirectly I would say yes if I wasn't around and John propositioned her one night whether she would succumb. I could understand her succumbing to John's charm because he is a good looker he's 37 I would understand it with John if anything happened but no that's a little bit I've missed out when Sheena said, I think I was a bit shocked really what did happen and I was shocked that Sheena let it happen as I say nothing did!"

"Well you all let it happen didn't you."

"Yes as I say"

"You all share the responsibility."

"John was very embarrassed about it because he didn't come up to see us for about 3 weeks he's been through 2 wives and lives with his mother he visits us 2 or 3 times a week; yes I think we all share the responsibility I said it was a one off thing as far as I'm aware I'm not saying if we got totally drunk again it couldn't happen again but who can actually predict the future I'm not saying I would voluntarily plan anything like that I don't think I would things do happen as I originally accepted perhaps with Sheena and somebody else one gets into a mental state of a physical state and things do happen."

"Perhaps afterwards she felt bad because she had wanted it to the extent that she had gone along with what had happened but also maybe she felt a bit let down by you in the sense that "I let it happen I didn't care for her."

"In some respects women still feel that the man has the ultimate say and that maybe she felt in that situation because you were ^{her} husband not exactly that you were telling her she had got to but if anybody was going to say no this is ridiculous it should have been you rather than her, does that make sense?"

"Yes, I think so, I mean I will she was looking to me to say right enoughs enough."

"Yes."

"Perhaps when she had got rid of her dress to say that's enough lets pack it in."

"Yes"

"No alright probably I've got a bit of a devil I don't know either we all are inwardly or outwardly if we release

our inhibitions enough I don't know. I found the whole episode erotically stimulating I must admit at the time.

"Yes and she probably found it quite exciting at the time if she was truthful."

"Yes its metaphorically like a dog with 2 bones!"

"Yes."

This extract starts before the counsellor's attribution to show how the counsellor has given the client a new insight into his wife's behaviour. He concludes his description of the incident by putting the blame on his wife: "I was shocked that Sheena let it happen" - although at the beginning of his description of the incident he makes it clear it was his friend's idea. The counsellor prepares the way by pointing out that all three share responsibility for what happened before making her attribution about how his wife might have felt. The client is able to accept the attribution, and finally to admit his own responsibility for the incident by admitting that he found it enjoyable. After making her attribution the counsellor in fact says very little the word yes is sufficient to encourage the client himself to continue along the same lines.

Mr K

"But she can have her independence and her marriage if you don't mind her being independent but perhaps its that that she doesn't appreciate at the moment, she doesn't understand that she can have both, that it's alright to be a married woman and care about her husband and also to be independent." Counsellors attribution

"You see lots of women, going round firms, they've got happy marriages grown up children, so I've got

to try and convince her that she can have both
as long as I learn to live with her being out.

Acceptance
and
Amplification

"If you don't mind her having both, yes, I mean you
may feel strongly you don't want a wife who has
her independence."

"Yes, and No, I feel I would worry if she was out
a lot of the eveningsum if it just simply means
a day job and the occasional night out with her
friends well that's alright probably it does and
then that wouldn't be too bad, but if it means
going on holiday alone or something like this then
it's a different thing it would depend."

In this extract the counsellor is returning to a theme she
introduced earlier in the session, that of the wife's need
for some independence, she also suggests it is possible
to be married and independent. The client on this occasion
accepts the attribution but also realises what this might
mean for him. The counsellor takes this up by checking
whether an independent wife is acceptable to him. His
next reply shows it is but there are limits to what he
would feel to be reasonable. On previous occasions when
the counsellor made similar points they had not been taken
up by the client.

Mr L

"She sounds very unhappy at the moment? "

Counsellors
attribution

"I think she is I'm sure she is I think she has
been under pressure a lot."

Acceptance and
amplification

"Do you know what that pressure might be? "

Question to
encourage client
to say more

"I don't unless it's been she does out work
for our firm and they are a bit nothing or every-
thing they want it all back tomorrow when there
is work you have to do it or they want it done and
they get a bit the girl who collects is gets a bit
upset if it's not done I don't try to pressure
her I make some comments now and again she says
she wants to do housework she has never been
particularly houseproud house tidy, she will clean
the house well but it's always untidy which I
sometimes comment on I'll admit I'm inclined to
make it untidy we have got 2 children 12 and 13
boy and a girl. We try to do what's best for them
we try to get them to do a great deal, personally
I keep saying you will have to do a bit more and
help your mum, it's alright for a couple of days
and then it goes back and they don't do anything
for a couple of months and I'm not very good at
doing things around the house driving 12 or 14
hours a day. I was never there and when I came
home all I wanted to do was sit down and relax.
I'm not out of touch I can do some if it comes
to the crunch you have to do it but I don't. I
never have done a lot of housework perhaps I'm
wrong now I work 8, 9, 10 hours a day and I come
home and I want to sit down by the time I've had
my dinner and that its, 7, 8 o'clock at night I
don't feel like getting up by then I'm quite prepared

for it perhaps I should do."

"But she has not complained in the past about you not doing enough?"

Another question to encourage client to continue

"She has occasionally it's a job to know what^{to}/do I've had a spate of bronchial asthma a sudden spate of wheezing so I have been advised not/^{to}do gardening and that, which has left her with the gardening to do I found it convenient I detest gardening but she said I could do the digging so of course there's a problem about when the garden needs digging but I don't know I honestly don't know."

"So you had a serious accident not long after going back to live with her is that right?"

In this extract the client accepts that the counsellor may be right and his wife is unhappy. He is then able to come up with quite a lot of reasons why this might be when encouraged to do so by the counsellor. However, when he gets to the point of admitting his own part in her difficulties, the counsellor changes the subject. This was probably a mistake with this particular client, particularly going back to his accident, since he had a tendency to admit responsibility in one breath but in the next come up with a health reason as to why he could not actually do anything different. It would have probably been better for the counsellor to have persisted and tried to find some specific task he would have been prepared to help his wife with. This is one way in which tape recording sessions can be of great benefit: if a subject is not pursued when there is an opportunity, it may be the counsellor's fault and not

the clients.

Mr M

"Is it my fault?"

"I don't see it as anybody's fault."

"You don't think that matters?"

"No. The important thing is what you want."

"You see I feel that if someone could prove to me, you know, it's either black or white to me, if someone could prove to me that it's my fault."

"But you believe that don't you, that's why you don't have a very high opinion of yourself, you do believe it's your fault, and all the things I'm saying to you, you look at as if I'm confirming that as if I'm blaming you."

Counsellors
Att.

Mumble.

"Well the way I can help you, is to let you talk and to try and boost your self confidence a bit, so that you are able to go and do what it is that you want to do with your life."

"But should I do that?"

"Yes."

"Am I right to do what I want to do?"

"Yes. It's impossible to make other people happy if you're not happy, and you can't be happy if you don't do what you want to do."

"Surely that's selfish isn't it, it's doing what I want to do. I don't do everything I want to do."

"But at the moment you don't seem to be doing anything at all."

"No absolutely nothing. It's always been my ambition to own my own house, we had a chance to buy a house, we'd been tenants for 25 years, so we could have bought that one for about £5,000 admittedly it's a three storey house, it's not everybody's cup of tea, but in this area to get a house for £5,000 is quite good but I want to be compatible with the person I was living in it with, there are times when I feel I'm going to give in, (mumble). But I want to be compatible with the person I was living with, that's one thing I've always wanted to is to buy my own house which was another thing the wife didn't agree on years ago."

This client had a very low opinion of himself, and had a tendency to see himself as the cause of all the problems 'Is it my fault?' was a question he asked more than once. The counsellor's attribution is in response to that, and she goes on to suggest how counselling might help him. The client is interested but full of self doubt, so he responds to the counsellor with further questions at first before

he finally admits that he not doing what he wants to do and is able to come up spontaneously with a specific example.

Summary

When examining transcripts to find examples of extended dialogues, it was found that although the counsellor may start making attributions early on in the counselling session, none of the extended dialogues came less than half way through the session. This suggests that the counsellor needs to know quite a lot about how the client sees her problems before she is able to make alternative explanations that the client will find acceptable. In many cases the counsellors attributions arise directly from what the client is saying, as these extracts show. The counsellor is therefore attempting to show the client that there are possible interpretations of the behaviour that she is describing other than the one the client has given. Sometimes the counsellors attribution is an interpretive summary of several comments by the client rather than a direct result of a single remark from the client. For example the counsellor's attribution to Mr L "She sounds unhappy at the moment" was a response to several different descriptions by Mr L of his wife's behaviour. The counsellor will also repeat attributions that she has made earlier in the session and which may not have been taken up by the client when the counsellor made them initially. The counsellor usually waits for a suitable opening from the client to enable her to re-introduce an attribution that has been previously rejected. The evidence therefore seems to be that the counsellor makes her attributions in first sessions at least in a passive manner; they arise from what the client has said. This explains why in numerical terms the counsellor is not redressing the balance and offering

more partner attributions when the client makes more self attributions or vice versa, when the client talks about herself the counsellor makes attributions about the client.

When the extended dialogues were first discussed it was suggested that a successful first counselling session was one which led to the client wanting to return for more counselling, this implies that if the client does not return/^{then}the counselling was a failure. This may be the case if the counsellor has been unable to offer the client any new insights into her problems, the client may see no point in further counselling. However, this assumes clients initially intend to continue coming for counselling and want to find a solution to their problems. Sometimes coming to see a counsellor is part of a game being played between the partners, the one who has come can go home and tell her partner the marriage must be in a bad state because she had to go and see a counsellor. Clients may also not be interested in finding a solution to their problems; they may only want to pour out their troubles to a sympathetic listener. In Milton Keynes many people feel lonely and isolated, they do not have parents nearby to talk to, and many have found it difficult to make friends, so the counsellor is used as a substitute. Although the client may not return and may not have taken up any of the counsellor's attributions at the time, she may nevertheless think about them on her own afterwards, and they may influence her future behaviour. Some clients do also return at a future date when they feel more ready to work on their problems.

Second Interviews

Second interviews with all of the female clients, except Mrs H have been transcribed. Unfortunately it has not

been possible to analyse them in detail with an independent rater, because this would have been too time consuming. The experimenter decided not to attempt a detailed analysis on her own because she felt it would be difficult to compare the results of this analysis with the analysis of the first interviews. If the numbers of attributions or the nature of attributions seemed different it would be impossible to say whether that was a reflection of the difference between first and second interviews or whether it was due to the difference in the analysis. It is, however, possible to examine the transcripts to see if there is any evidence that the clients return spontaneously to attributions suggested by the counsellor in the first session. It has been suggested that an important part of a first counselling session for clients living with their partner who return for counselling is that the client engages in an extended dialogue with the counsellor about at least one of the attributions the counsellor has suggested. If these attributions are accepted by the client as important it is likely that she will refer to them herself in some way during the second session. Mrs B is unusual because there was a month's gap between her first session and her second. This gap was partly due to the Christmas holiday but also to the fact that she slipped a disc and had to spend ten days laying on her back. When she came to the first session she was extremely depressed and felt that neither her husband nor her teenage children cared about her, she also felt they did give her enough practical help with running the home. When she came to the second session she looked much calmer and happier. One of her opening remarks was "I have sorted myself out a little bit and coming to you just that one day, just talking things out seemed to relieve the tension just a little bit."

When the counsellor asks a direct question about her husband - "Do you feel he is giving you a bit more help now", she replies - "Well when I was ill you see I had a slipped disc and I had to lay on the floor for 10 days downstairs he seemed quite happy to take over when he had to. So I thought well perhaps I am thinking he cannot do it and all the time he really can." In this case, circumstances forced her to review her attitude towards her husband, and this may have happened even if she had not come for counselling. She does however later in the session refer to two other topics that the counsellor made attributions about, her children and her sleeping tablets. "Yes so its 2 things I will try to do this year, start treating them as adults and stop taking sleeping tablets." At the end of the session after it had been decided that she did not need to come again she says "I feel better coming to you again because you are putting ideas into my mind that I hadn't thought of before."

She is therefore acknowledging directly that she has found the counsellors way of looking at her problems helpful. This could be just politeness on her part but many clients do not say anything at all to thank the counsellor or acknowledge what things have helped them.

Mrs C had a severe sexual problem with her partner which lead him to hit her sometimes. He tried to convince her the sexual problem was her fault and she must do something about it. She felt that she loved him and wanted to stay with him but she did not want to have to put up with being hit, and she felt she had gone off sex as a result of the violence. The counsellor made a great many attributions in the first counselling session attempting to take 'blame'

away from both partners and to explain that the couple had got themselves into a vicious circle which they needed to get out of. The counsellor was also worried for the safety of the client and suggested that it would be a good idea if her husband came for counselling too. Mrs C came back alone the following week and explained that she had actually confronted her husband with his behaviour. "He was in a terrible rage, and I said to him whats wrong with you, and he said you, so I said what do you mean me, I said I've done nothing wrong, he said you have been to see somebody and now you are trying to put the blame on me. I said nobody is trying to put the blame on you, I said the idea is to talk about the actual trouble what is wrong, get to the bottom of it and help me or help you."

"Her husband tried to insist several times that she was trying to blame him, she firmly insisted that she was not. The counsellor had also suggested to her that maybe he felt inadequate about his own performance and this was the cause of some of his anger at her; for this reason the counsellor had felt that it was not a good idea to teach the client how to arouse herself in case it increased his feelings of inadequacy. The client also refers to this in a way that shows she has understood the point although it comes out garbled. "I said I don't really see that if I go and she will explain things and she'll talk, I said, because I think it's a threat to you, because if I arouse myself and climax myself you are going to think I don't need you." As a result of this big argument, he slept downstairs on the settee for several nights, but he did not hit her. The quarrel was made up on his initiative when he bought her a large box of chocolates and a Valentine's card. Later on in the session she refers to another

attribution made by the counsellor. "I think he understands me better now, we're not in a circle anymore, he seemed to have seen what I was talking about and not blaming him." This client then seems to have picked up the general message the counsellor was trying to give her and also accepted some of the specific attributions made by the counsellor. She has been able to use these insights to dramatically improve her relationship with her husband. It is probable that the counselling was responsible for this change, since these rows had been happening for several years and the usual outcome was for her husband to storm out to the pub or if he had just come back from there to hit her. The argument would then recur at a later date with similar outcomes.

Mrs F came for counselling because she had just discovered that her husband was having an affair. She acknowledged that the marriage was not very happy before that, but she saw the responsibility as largely her husband's. Two years before she had stopped taking the pill without his knowledge and she got pregnant. He was very angry about that and insisted that she had an abortion which she eventually did, but she was angry with him for wanting her to have an abortion. Since then they had been rowing frequently, the usual outcome of the rows being Mrs F threatening to leave. The counsellor attempted gently to show Mrs F that the responsibility was shared and not just her husband's; the counsellor made more joint attributions with this client than with any other. The client was, in the first session reluctant to accept a share of the responsibility. In the second session, however, she is more willing to acknowledge her part in their problems. "I suppose I have made him pay. I have made him pay for 2 years." She had been

reluctant to accept in the first session that she wanted the abortion but in the second session she is ready to accept when the counsellor suggests it, that she didn't want another baby. "Perhaps inside that's actually what happened about the baby. You knew you could cope if you went through with it but you didn't actually want to." Response "Yes I think that's probably fair."

She actually comments directly on how the first session felt to her "Last week I actually felt quite happy, a bit like the good catholic thing again. It's like going to confession." "I think an impartial viewpoint is better than a biased viewpoint." She also says later on "I think perhaps you're right. From things that have been said I think you are right." However, at the time that she says this it is not at all clear whether she means everything the counsellor has said or something in particular. This client often appears to be agreeing with the counsellor but cannot bring herself to spell out in full what is she is agreeing with; she will stop halfway and say etc. For example "He said he won't give her up, but then I don't even know whether that's just a gesture, whether he as you say he does think himself stronger etc." Taken by itself it is not very clear what this statement means, but because the counsellor knows what she has said to the client it is easy for her to be convinced that the client has accepted what she has said. With this particular client the counsellor's feeling was that she was rather slippery and was evading responsibility for her actions, but in the sessions themselves it was difficult to pin down exactly what she was saying that created this impression. Reading the transcript, and seeing how frequently her sentences fade away as she starts an attribution and never quite finishes it, makes it clearer

how she is managing to be evasive and yet appears to be co-operating. She is well educated and articulate so it is not simply a lack of verbal skill that makes her respond in this way. Towards the end of the session she does accept another of the counsellor's attributions from the first session - "I think actually one of the things you said, the testing and the proving and all the rest of it, seems to have an awful lot to do with our relationship."

The second interviews with the three women whose husbands have left them for other women have been transcribed. The counsellor makes fewer attributions to these women in their first sessions than to any other group of clients. There are no extended dialogues between client and counsellor about one of the counsellors attributions in these first interviews, and no evidence in the second sessions that the clients have retained any of the counsellor's attributions, except in the case of Mrs A. With this client the counsellor makes the most attributions in the first session (4), Mrs A makes a comment on the prospects of her marriage working if her husband did come back to her - "From what you said last week I think it's only likely to work if he has grown up a bit in the meantime." This comment in fact suggests that not only has the client accepted at least part of the counsellors view of her husband but that she is moving away from her position in the first session that she would have her husband back at any price, she would do anything to achieve that. She is beginning to see that there may be no point in having him back if he cannot behave differently.

Mrs J only came twice, of the 3 women whose husbands had left home her position seemed the most clear cut her husband had unknown to her been living with another woman in London during the week (she thought he was in lodgings).

There seemed little prospect that he would come back to his wife and children, and in some ways the knowledge of the other woman's existence was a relief to her as it explained why her husband had been acting strangely. The counsellor only made one attribution in the first interview, so it is not surprising that there is no evidence in the second session of the client taking up an attribution made by the counsellor in the first session. She explains why she sees no point in any more counselling at that time - "I suppose in this moment of no-mans land it's not very much point in taking up your time is there, because I'm sort of a little bit - you know, there's not a great deal more you can help with really". "If he was to come back and wanted to discuss it I think I'd see some point for him to come with me and talk together over it." "I think he'd take more notice of a complete stranger assessing it from his point of view and seeing it and sort of giving him advice on a non biased basis." She does say that she has benefited from the counselling "I know it has helped me to talk to you about it." This could of course just be politeness, although the fact that she can see benefits in their both coming if her husband were to return suggests she does genuinely feel the counselling was of benefit.

Mrs I's main motive for coming for counselling appears from the transcript of her second session to be to receive confirmation of her own attitudes. She asks the counsellor more direct questions about her personal attitudes than any other client. She describes her husband's desire to set up a triangular household including his girlfriend, she says she is not interested in any such arrangement and asks the counsellor for her opinion - "I know you are not

supposed to pass comment but I'm not odd am I?" "What do you think of all this? It's a bit like something out of the Sunday papers, is it not? It seems to be to me."

These extracts suggest that the needs of clients in this situation where a partner has actually left home are perhaps more varied than those of clients still living with their partners who want to mend their marriages. Some want to try to win their partner back, others want confirmation that their own attitudes are correct, others want to test out the counsellor to see if she could be trusted to be unbiased if their partner could be persuaded to come as well.

Later Sessions

No third or subsequent sessions have been transcribed nor have second sessions of the male clients and the two couples. It is possible, however, to give a brief resumé of the clients position at the start of counselling and compare it with her position at the end. This provides some more subjective evidence for changes in the clients attribution processes.

Mrs A came for more sessions than any other client in the sample (30). When she came for her first session her husband had left her and was living with another woman. In that first session she was saying she wanted him back and would do anything to achieve this and make the relationship work. She had already begun to modify her position in the second session, and as the sessions proceeded she was able to impose conditions on him that she felt had to be met before he came back to show that he was prepared to put effort into the relationship. Her conditions were not unreasonable or unrealistic but he was unable to comply with them although he said he wanted to return. She eventually found the strength to tell him the relationship was definitely over,

as it was clear to her he was unable or unwilling to co-operate with her, and at the close of counselling she was suing for divorce and making plans for her future. This process may have occurred without the help of a counsellor, but she would probably have been much more distressed about it all since she had no close relatives in Milton Keynes to support her.

Mrs C came only once more after the second session. The biggest changes in her occurred between sessions one and two, and have already been discussed. Her husband never did come for counselling. On the third session she had become convinced that he would not hit her again and felt that he was much more loving towards her. She seems to have understood what the counsellor said about her husband feeling inadequate, since she reported a sexual encounter in which they had cuddled and kissed and her husband had failed to get an erection but she had not minded that and did not feel anyone was to blame, and he did not get angry or upset about it either. It is hard to believe that these dramatic changes in behaviour and attitude would have happened over such a short period of time without counselling.

Mrs F came 8 times altogether. As mentioned before the counsellor found her to be a very difficult client. She appeared to be co-operating and agreeing with the counsellor but when her words were examined she was often in fact evasive and difficult to pin down. The counsellor found it very difficult to keep her to any particular subject for any length of time. There appeared to be very little change in this case over time. Her husband continued to live at home and insist that he would not end his other

relationship. He used to go and stay with the other woman sometimes. Mrs F could not come to terms with this and accept it but nor could she bring herself to discuss the possibility that the relationship should actually end, if she couldn't cope with her husband's affair. There seemed no possibility that he would change his behaviour.

Mrs H came seven times. She was always very quiet and found it very difficult to talk about her problems. However, she did manage by session 3 to talk about her father's attempt at incest. She seemed to cheer up slowly after that and became more self-confident. She had stayed at home, hardly going out anywhere, while her husband was abroad with his work. She stopped coming after the seventh session because she got a job as a sales person. Counselling seems to have helped her gain confidence in herself. It is hard to say whether her marriage was improved by the counselling since her husband was abroad for most of the time she came.

Mrs I was another woman who was living apart from her husband at the start of counselling. She seemed to be using her children as weapons in a battle to punish her husband when it became clear that he was unlikely to return. The counsellor had strong feelings about this and challenged her, as a result she stopped coming for counselling. However, she returned a year later and this time she came with her husband for one session so that they could sort out matters of finance, custody and access. Although the counsellor's message at the time had been unacceptable she had clearly acted on part of it and understood that her children might suffer if she did not. She also trusted the counsellor enough to use her as an arbitrator. The counselling does.

therefore seem to have helped her see the problems differently although she could not accept the need for that at the time.

Client Counsellor Interaction - An Overview

In summary, it seems that in cases where client and counsellor do engage in an extended dialogue about one of the counsellors attributions in the first counselling session, the clients return for further counselling and over the course of the counselling the client modifies his or her attributions about the relationship. Discussion of specific examples of this process can make it seem that the counsellor is imposing her view of the problems on to the client. This, however, is not really an accurate reflection of what is happening. The client has already worked out her own set of attributions for why the relationship has problems; she may have tried to modify her behaviour in the light of these attributions, but for some reason none of this has achieved a marked improvement in the relationship. (If it had she would not have come for counselling). The client is therefore looking for solutions to her problems but is open to being convinced that in order to find a suitable solution she needs to modify the way she looks at the problem. Clients sometimes do this for themselves; the act of explaining their problems to the counsellor can make them feel that some of the explanations they are offering are inadequate, so they modify them without the counsellor having to contribute much. In this situation the counsellor is likely to reinforce the client's own tentative new insight by rephrasing it and reflecting it back to the client. Many of the client-counsellor dialogues originate therefore not from the counsellor but from the client. The counsellor makes many attributions and most of these are

rejected only a few are taken up by the client in the first session and none of these may survive to the second session; the client may have second thoughts after she leaves the counselling room or she may attempt to modify her behaviour as a result of the reinterpretation and finds that this does not lead to the outcome she expected and so the new attribution is rejected.

New attributions whether supplied by the client or the counsellor are not necessarily any more "true" than the old attributions in a factual sense, they are not an attempt to modify an "inaccurate" view of the problem to a more "accurate" one. They are intended to help the client see her problem in a way that either enables her to accept what is happening and cope with it better, or to change it in some way. A new attribution is only "better" if it is more use to the client in her attempt to resolve her problems than previous attributions. A good example of this would be the counsellor's attribution to Mrs C that her husband feels sexually inadequate. Mrs C modified her behaviour as a result of this attribution, and this helped her improve the situation she was in. Mrs C's husband may not have felt sexually inadequate, this attribution may have been "untrue", but it helped Mrs C change her behaviour in ways her previous attributions had not. It was, therefore "better" than the previous attributions. It is possible that client or counsellor could have supplied a different new attribution which would have been equally useful. The client and counsellor therefore are together working out a modified set of attributions for the client to use which enable her either to accept her situation more easily or change it more effectively. They are not trying to uncover the "truth" about the relationship. It is, however, some-

times the case that client or counsellor convince themselves that a particular attribution is the "truth" in an absolute sense, if they are both in agreement and this "truth" helps the client then there is probably no harm in this. Difficulties arise when client and counsellor do not agree if the client sees her attribution as the "truth" and the counsellor does not accept this the client may feel the counsellor lacks understanding; if the counsellor sees her attribution as the "truth" and the client does not accept it, she may see her client as obstructive.

Summary of Results

This chapter has investigated the hypothesis that there will be a difference between the attribution interactions of client and counsellor in a first counselling session of clients who continue in counselling compared with those who do not. The sample size is small and so any conclusion drawn needs to be supported by further evidence. However, all of the clients in this sample who were living with their partners and wanted their relationships to continue, engaged in an extended dialogue with the counsellor about at least one of the counsellor's attributions. None of the clients who failed to return for a second session engaged in an extended dialogue with the counsellor about any of her attributions. This does suggest that counsellors attributions as well as clients have an impact on the counselling process and that more investigation with a larger client sample would be worthwhile. However, the client-counsellor interaction with clients whose partners have left them seems to be rather different. The counsellor makes fewer attributions and seems to be providing support rather than a reinterpretation of the clients situation. Although, again, this conclusion can only be tentative because of the sample size.

The counsellor seems to be most active in offering alternative attributions when the client makes relatively few self attributions. The counsellor also makes significantly more "partner" attributions to both male and female clients when the client is also making more attributions about their partner. These differences, however, may be a reflection of the researcher's style as counsellor and they may not be found with another counsellor. These results and their implications will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

As I said in the introductory chapter, one of the motivations behind this piece of research was a feeling of frustration about the lack of research into marital counselling in this country and the lack of an adequate dialogue between researchers and practitioners. The findings of this research therefore need to be reviewed in the light of this frustration to see if they contain any messages for counselling practitioners which might help them improve their counselling practice.

An outcome study was avoided because it is difficult to decide what should be the criteria of success in marital counselling - separation or reconciliation, both partners feeling the outcome of the counselling is satisfactory or only one, etc. It is, however, not possible to avoid some implicit or explicit consideration of what is a successful outcome to counselling when examining the counselling process. In this research, because it has concentrated on a detailed analysis of first counselling sessions, success has been measured in terms of whether the clients returned for a second counselling session. This was because marital interaction problems are usually too complex to be resolvable as a result of one counselling session; in most cases the client needs to be convinced of the usefulness of returning for there to be any hope of significant changes occurring in the marital relationship. This does not mean that change in the marital interaction is guaranteed if the client

stays in counselling long enough, nor does it mean that clients who have come for one session only have got nothing at all out of the counselling.

A study of client variables alone or counsellor variables alone was also avoided since both counselling and psychotherapy are interactive processes. Success or failure is unlikely to be due solely to aspects of the counsellor or aspects of the client it is most likely to be a result of their interaction.

It was felt it was better to investigate the verbal content of the counselling sessions from the perspective of a particular psychological theory. Although some information is lost this way, because it does not fit into the framework of the theory, it was thought to be better than attempting to analyse the whole of a counselling session without the perspective of a theory to give the information structure. Possible theoretical approaches were described in chapter 4. The clinically based theories such as psychoanalysis were not considered to be suitable for the analysis of the content of MG counselling sessions. Counsellors do not usually consistently use a particular theory to interpret what clients tell them. This does not stop the researcher using a particular clinical theory to analyse the counselling sessions but in practice it is difficult. Each theory has its own language for expressing its ideas and it can be difficult without making inferences to interpret the content of a counselling session using a theory which has not been used by the counsellor because the language used to express ideas in the counselling is different. Communication theories, attitude theories, interpersonal perception theories and attribution theories were also discussed as possible theoretical perspectives on client counsellor interaction. Attribution theory was chosen as the most suitable theory since it has been extensively investigated in the laboratory and has also been applied to psychotherapy and marital

interaction. It is a theory about how people explain the situations they are in, and in a first counselling session the client is attempting to explain to the counsellor what her problem is and why she feels she has got it. There are however problems associated with the use of attribution theory, largely the sort of problems which arise when a theory is translated from a constrained and controlled laboratory setting and used to explain events in the "real" world where the same controls and constraints do not apply.

Research Hypotheses

Although attribution theory has been investigated in laboratory based experiments and used in studies of marital interaction, it has never actually been used to analyse the contents of counselling sessions before. For this reason it was felt, it was best to investigate fairly general hypotheses. It was intended that these hypotheses should be used as a structural framework rather than a straight jacket to restrict analysis. Five hypotheses were formulated altogether.

- a) Clients will make attributions about their marital problems to the counsellor in a counselling session.
- b) Counsellors will make attributions about the client's marital problems to the client in a counselling session.
- c) There will be a difference between the attribution interaction of client and counsellor in a first counselling session of clients who continue in counselling compared with those who do not.
- d) Clients attributions can be sub-classified into a number of categories. Two of these categories are likely to be "situational" and "dispositional"; other possibilities are "attitude", "motivation" and "expectation".

e) In a marital counselling session a client will make more situational than dispositional attributions about her own behaviour and more dispositional than situational about her partner's. The basis for these hypotheses was discussed in chapter 6.

Transcript Analysis

The preliminary analysis of the transcripts was described and discussed in chapter 7. The researcher and an independent rater separately analysed the transcripts to identify attributions. It was felt that inter-rater agreement was satisfactory given the complexity of the task. After analysing the transcripts separately, the raters conferred to produce an agreed set of attributions for each transcript.

It was found that all clients made many attributions (24 being the lowest number in a single one-hour session for a client coming alone). The first hypothesis was therefore supported. No client gave a single explanation for her problems such as "my husband is having an affair". All clients attempted to interpret their own and their partners behaviour and give reasons for the events they described.

Both counsellors also made attributions, thus supporting the second hypothesis. The Manchester counsellor could not have been doing this to oblige the researcher because she was not told enough about the research to be able to change her counselling style in line with any expectations of the researcher. Although the researcher knew before she started the analysis that she sometimes offered her clients alternative explanations for some of their problems, she had no idea what impact this had on the counselling process.

Categorisation of Attributions

The next stage of the analysis was to attempt to sub-classify the clients self and partner attributions. The sub-categories were based on categories developed by attribution theorists, these are

described in full in chapter 5 and are summarised in the fourth hypothesis. No formal definitions of attribution categories exist which are suitable to be used with unstructured data. The researcher therefore had to develop her own definitions, but it was in practice impossible to produce definitions which meant there was no ambiguity about the category to which an attribution should be assigned. The lists of attributions were categorised by five people including the researcher all working dependently, they never conferred. Altogether, of 1,001 attribution statements, 808 reached the criterion of at least 3 out of the 5 raters agreeing on the category this represented 81% of the total. For almost half of the statements four out of five raters placed the statement in the same category and the raters were unanimous for 20% of the attributions. These levels of agreement were considered satisfactory considering the complexity of the task. Although some attribution categories were used more often than others, all of the five categories, 'person', 'situation', 'expectation', 'attitude' and 'motivation' were used, and all clients used attributions from more than one category. The fourth hypothesis that clients' attributions could be sub-categorised and that 'situation', 'disposition', 'expectation', 'attitude' and 'motivation' were possible categories was therefore supported. It was found that the 'attitude' and 'emotion' category was the most frequently used and 'motivation' the least frequently used. An analysis of the differences between the raters suggested that the definitions of 'disposition' and 'situation' attributions were the most reliable. The definition of motivation attributions was the least reliable and needs improving. The reliability of the definitions of expectation and attitude attributions was reasonable, but because these were the two most common categories, confusion between them was the commonest source of error. They could perhaps benefit from being redefined in a way that emphasises their differences.

The attitude and emotion category was the most used in this research but it is a category which has been neglected by laboratory researchers. They tend to investigate non-emotional interactions between strangers. It would be useful if they were to construct some more emotionally charged written scenarios then it might be possible to develop some testable hypotheses about this attribution category.

Situation versus Disposition Hypothesis

Until now experimental research has been focused on the 'personality' and 'situation' sub divisions of attributions, and this has shown that people have a tendency to attribute their own behaviour to some aspect of the situation they are in and other peoples behaviour to some aspects of the persons personality. The research, however, has involved the use of written scenarios of the interaction of strangers. 'Situation' and 'disposition' are also defined in such a way that all of the attributions fit into one category or the other. For this research the hypothesis was modified to take account of the fact that the client is both actor and observer in the marital interaction. The hypothesis therefore because-: in a marital counselling a client will make more situational than dispositional attributions about her own behaviour and more dispositional than situational about her partners.

It was found that using the definitions of situation and personality developed in this research, there was no significant difference between the number of personality or disposition attributions for either clients' self or partner attributions. This finding may simply result from the different definitions of situation and personality used in this research compared with previous research. However, it may also reflect the differences between the situations investigated. Researchers have concentrated on fairly simple interactions between strangers. This research was investigating a complex interaction between two people who know each other well. This research has

also suggested that there may be differences in attributional style between clients; if this is the case, differences in style may confound any general tendency for situation or personality attributions to be followed. The findings from this research therefore suggest that it would be a good idea for researchers to investigate interactions between people who are well known to each other to find out if the situation versus disposition hypothesis in fact only applies to non-emotional interactions between strangers.

Attribution Interaction Analysis

Chapter nine concentrated on between client differences in attribution style and the interaction between the clients' attributions and the counsellors. Just one hypothesis was used as the basis for this analysis: that there will be a difference between the attribution interaction of client and counsellor in a first counselling session of clients who continue in counselling compared with those who do not. It was hoped that this analysis would yield information which could be useful to the counselling practitioner. The sample size is small and there are no pre-existing studies of the use of attribution theory to analyse counselling sessions, so any conclusions reached have to be tentative and need further research evidence to support them. However, even tentative findings can help the counselling practitioner clarify her thinking and help her experiment with new ways of relating to her clients.

There were a number of ways the women clients in this sample could be sub-divided for comparison purposes. One possible split was between those clients who were still living with their partners and were working towards improving their relationship and those clients whose husbands had left and were living with other women, so there was no real possibility of the marriage being repaired. The clients whose partners had left seemed to need a different sort

of counselling compared with the others. The counsellor made fewer attributions to this group of women, and seemed to be providing sympathy and support rather than making a serious attempt to help the clients gain insight into why their husbands have left. In the longer term, however, if these women want to remarry and avoid the same mistakes they need to understand what has happened and how much of it is their responsibility - either directly (what was it they were doing that made it more likely that their partner would leave?) or indirectly (what was it that made them choose the type of man who was likely to go off with another women?). It would be interesting to find out if the number of attributions made by the counsellor to these clients increased over time. It may also be the case that another counsellor would have offered women in this situation more attributions right from the beginning. The counsellor may have been treating the clients as fragile and unable to cope with new insights when that is not the case. Counsellors do, however, talk in case discussion groups about the need to support clients who have been abandoned. It would be useful to examine some first interviews between other counsellors and their clients to see if other counsellors relate differently to clients who are on their own compared with those working to save their marriages.

A suprising finding, perhaps, was that for all clients joint attributions were relatively small in number in spite of the fact that the focus of marital counselling is meant to be clients' interactions with their partners. In fact the clients who made the highest proportion of interactive attributions were the clients who did not return for a second counselling session. It would be interesting to see if this finding is repeated with a larger sample of clients, and whether the proportion of joint attributions increases or decreases over several counselling sessions. It is difficult to suggest

any reasons for this finding from such a small sample. It could be that clients see an interaction as harder to change than an individual. Alternatively, a joint attribution may stem from a lack of insight by the clients into their own and their partners' contribution to an interaction. One client may say "We just cannot communicate", without any idea as to why they cannot; another client may say "I try to talk to him but he never listens to me". The second client is showing that she has not only identified the problem (poor communication), but she has made some attempt at identifying why the communication is poor. The counsellor's task is much easier with the second client; she can ask for more detail about how the client is talking to her partner and why she feels her partner is not listening. The counsellor may as a result, offer an alternative attribution or suggest better ways for the client to talk to her partner or ways in which she can increase the possibility that her partner will listen. The first client when asked why she feels she and her partner do not communicate may say, "I don't know". In this situation it would be difficult for the counsellor to suggest an alternative attribution, and obtaining useful information to help her requires much more skill than when the client already has some ideas of her own. However, all of this is speculative and requires further research.

Investigation of the research hypothesis that there would be a difference between the attribution interaction of client and counsellor in a first counselling session of clients who continue in counselling compared with those who do not, yielded useful information.

All of the clients who were living with their partners at the time of counselling and who returned for a second session engaged in an extended dialogue with the counsellor about at least one of the attributions she had suggested. If this is true of other counsellors

it is an important point. Counsellors are encouraged to show warmth and empathy to their clients, and they know that over time their task is to help their clients gain insight into their own behaviour. The emphasis initially in the counselling is to establish a good relationship with the client and to show her that the counsellor empathises with her problem. It is not appreciated that the client might need something more tangible from the first counselling session, such as new insight into her problem. The process by which the client gains new insight is also not explained or perhaps understood. This research suggests that the client is actively looking for ways of explaining the situation she is in she will provide many explanations of her own but she is open to accepting plausible explanations offered by the counsellor. This perhaps provides one explanation for why behaviour therapy works so effectively when used to treat suitable problems. The client is offered not only a plausible set of explanations for her problem but also a treatment strategy that enables her to do something about the behaviour that she wants to change. Marriage Guidance Counsellors who train to be sex therapists often say that practicing as a sex therapist also seems to improve their counselling skills. The reason for this may be that the sex therapists take a history from each partner and then they work out a detailed formulation of the couples dysfunction, where it comes from and what is maintaining it in the present. They then discuss this formulation with the clients and modify it in the light of feed-back from the client. This may lead them to look for explanations for their client's problems in counselling and discuss these explanations with the client much more than they did before they trained as sex therapists. If this research finding is generalisable to other counsellors, it suggests that counsellors need to be able to respond to what the client is saying and provide some plausible alternative explanations accept-

able to the client. This does not mean that the counsellor needs to overwhelm the client with alternatives, one explanation that is taken up by the client is enough. Perhaps this finding also applies to counsellors and therapists from all schools of thought. The difference between therapists of different schools of thought being in the nature of the alternative attributions they offer to their clients. If this is the case, it is important that the client finds her therapist's perspective convincing.

Clients who did not return to the counsellor did not take up any of the attributions she suggested. This may be because these clients do not really want to make any effort to change their relationship themselves, they are convinced that it is their husbands who need to change. Sometimes their motive for coming to counselling is to convince the counsellor that they are in the right so that they can go home and tell their partners that the counsellor agrees with them.

This type of client is unlikely to come more than once; if the counsellor appears to support her point of view she has got what she came for and need not return; if the counsellor appears unsympathetic to her view, then she is likely to feel future visits would be a waste of time. However, it may also be the case that the client would have been willing to return for more counselling but the counsellor was unable to suggest an alternative attribution that was meaningful to the client. Examination of some of the transcripts suggested that sometimes when the client was attributing most of the responsibility for her marital problems to her partner, the counsellors attributions reduced the husband's "blame" in a way that by implication increased the wife's "blame". These were the clients who did not return for more counselling. If the client had concentrated on her partner's responsibility for their marital problems and she did return for more counselling, the counsellor's

attributions about the partner were rather different. For these clients the counsellor was able to reduce the partner's "blame" for the marital problems without increasing the client's "blame". The researcher was unaware of this difference before analysing the transcripts. This is therefore a valuable finding even if it is not transferable to other counsellors. The researcher has learnt something about her own counselling which may be of benefit to her in the future. Even if all counsellors are unique in the way that they interact with their clients so that it is difficult to generalise research findings, this result suggests that other counsellors might gain valuable insights from an analysis of the attributions they make to their clients and the way they respond to their clients attributions.

Final Conclusions

This research has analysed in detail client-counsellor interaction from an attribution theory perspective, using five research hypotheses to structure the analysis. It has shown that clients and counsellors do indeed make attributions in counselling sessions. Although it is more difficult to identify and classify reliably attributions collected from unstructured "real word" data, compared to attributions obtained in constrained laboratory experiments, it was felt that reliability was satisfactory given the problems. It was found that the attributions could be reliably sub-classified using more categories than 'personality' and 'situation', the two categories normally used in laboratory studies. Other categories used were 'expectation', 'attitude' or 'emotion' and 'motivation'; these were all derived from attribution theory literature. Results suggest that attribution theorists need to develop experiments which study more complex situations than at present, - preferably ones which involve interactions between people known to each other, with a more emotionally charged content.

The client-counsellor interaction was also analysed to see if there were any lessons for the counselling practitioner from an attribution analysis. It was found that there appeared to be a difference between the client-counsellor interaction with clients who returned for more counselling compared with those who did not. All clients who returned for counselling who were living with their partners engaged in an extended dialogue with the counsellor about one of the counsellor's attributions; clients who did not return did not do this. Clients who were alone because their partners had left them, seemed to need support rather than help to reformulate their problems. There also seemed to be a difference in the nature of the attributions suggested to clients who returned for counselling compared to those who did not. These findings have to be tentative, as they may not generalise to other clients or counsellors; however, even if they are not generalisable the researcher has gained valuable insights into her own counselling. This suggests that other counsellors could also benefit from the insights gained from an analysis of their attribution interaction with their clients. It might also help increase the knowledge of attribution theorists and help them investigate more complex situations than at present in a controlled way so that more sophisticated hypotheses can be developed for use in the "real world".

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APPENDIX I

Q SORT STUDY

Introduction

In the early stages of this research I was interested in the interaction of client and counsellor variables as seen through the eyes of the counsellor. I intended to conduct a two-part investigation of this interaction. The first part of the investigation involved measuring counsellors perceptions of the type of man and the type of woman who would benefit from their counselling. I believe that each counsellor would have her own unique picture of who would benefit from her counselling. This belief was supported by a pilot study using experienced counsellors from Milton Keynes, who were asked to describe the type of man and the type of woman they felt would benefit from their counselling. Counsellors images of the type of man and the type of woman who would benefit from their counselling - were then measured more rigorously using the California Q set. It was intended that in the second stage of the investigation the counsellors should be asked to make a Q sort of actual clients they were counselling to see how well these matched up to the counsellors image of who would benefit from their counselling. I believed that clients where there was the greatest mismatch between the counsellors image of the "ideal" client and the counsellors image of the actual client would be the ones who were most likely to drop out of counselling early. However, for reasons which will be explained later on in this appendix, it was not possible to proceed to the second stage of this research.

Pilot Study

Six experienced counsellors were asked two questions; "Can you say what type of man would benefit from your counselling", and "Can you say what type of woman would benefit from your counselling". Half the counsellors were asked the former question first half the latter. Only one counsellor said "no"; "Each individual is unique, I cannot look back and see anything consistent". Two other counsellors felt that there was no difference between a man and a woman who would benefit from their counselling, but they each gave different answers. Counsellor B said "The ability to listen, persistence in carrying on with their narrative even when it is painful". Counsellor C said "Rapport achieved quickly, the client catches on to what I say, i.e. she has some degree of insight already, not intellectual". The other three counsellors did describe the male and female clients most likely to benefit from their counselling differently.

Counsellor D

Male client: "Hint of a sense of humour at some point we are going to be able to laugh at things together even if not to begin with. The feeling that they like me as a woman, they find me attractive. It is difficult to work with a man who I feel looks down on me as a woman and would take it all more seriously if it were a man counselling him. I can work well with someone taking me seriously as a professional counsellor. The know-all men are difficult".

Female client: The more talkative they are the easier it is to work although not too extreme. Not too defended, i.e. incredibly made up and dressed up with an obvious shell a veneer of sophistication. A certain degree of cheerfulness and a hint of some sort of a sense of humour".

Counsellor E

Male client: "Sensitivity although they may not be aware of it. Fairly honest with themselves, not threatened by me. Usually warm men. A sense of humour".

Female client: "A person able to look outside themselves, this comes across in the first interview when they talk about themselves, they can look outward and not dwell in the family circle, they have a strong masculine side, a sense of humour. Intelligence but not necessarily education. Sensitive to other people and their own feelings".

Counsellor F

Male Client: "Intelligence and keenness expressed by body movement, e.g. sitting forward they are able to start working quite quickly. Accept you as an equal and not as a woman in a male chauvinist way".

Female Client: "Quiet and not excitable ones seem to be helped more. Able to feel their way into what is being said".

These comments have to be interpreted cautiously since counsellors verbal descriptions will be influenced by what they think they ought to say. Counsellor A for example, felt that she could not describe who would benefit from her counselling. She may have said this because the message within the NMGC is that a good counsellor can potentially help anyone, and if she cannot help certain types of people then the failing is hers. She may in fact have an image of who she can help which influences her counselling but which she does not publicly acknowledge. Similarly the two counsellors who felt there was no difference between a man and a woman who would benefit from their counselling may have been influenced in what they said by the NMGC message. Also counsellors may not be giving an exhaustive list of qualities only the ones that seem most important to them. Two counsellors mentioned a sense of humour in their answers, the fact that the others didn't mention it may mean that it is not at

all important to them, or it may mean it is important but not so much as the other characteristics they mentioned. If they had been asked if it was important for a client to have a sense of humour, they may have all said "yes". However, if the researcher puts words into their mouths they may say "yes" because they believe it is expected of them. There is also a danger that they will appear to have an identical picture of who will benefit from their counselling, when in reality they do not.

The three counsellors who gave different descriptions of male and female clients they felt would benefit from their counselling, may have done so because they felt that was expected of them but that is not so likely since the organisation imposes the expectation that all counsellors will be able to help everyone irrespective of their sex. All of the descriptions of male clients able to benefit from counselling contain explicit comments on the client counsellor interaction. Counsellor D wants to feel the man likes her as a woman and finds her attractive, counsellor E does not want the man to feel threatened by her, counsellor F wants him to accept her as an equal. This contrasts with the descriptions of women likely to benefit from counselling where the emphasis is on qualities in the women themselves, the nearest to an interactive comment is counsellor D's remark that the more talkative the client the easier it is to work. This is an interesting difference and it may reflect a difference in approach of female counsellors to male and female clients, or it may reflect a more generalised difference in the way women describe women and men.

Although there are problems of interpretation when analysing verbal descriptions, the evidence from this pilot study does suggest that counsellors do have their own

unique picture of who will benefit from their counselling and this picture can be different for male and female clients. It is therefore possible that clients who match the counsellors image of who will benefit from their counselling closely are more likely to stay in counselling than clients who do not fit the counsellors image of who will benefit. In order to put this hypothesis to the test, it is necessary to find a method of measuring the counsellors image of who will benefit from counselling which will enable comparisons to be made between counsellors.

Choice of Test

In order to make comparisons between counsellors of their image of who will benefit from their counselling it is better to use some kind of inventory of personality characteristics than counsellors self report. The test used needs to cover many aspects of personality. It is also better if it weights the personality characteristics in some way so that counsellors are not just picking out the characteristics that are important to them but also ranking their relative importance. This is necessary because it is possible that there is broad agreement between counsellors as to which personality factors are likely to be present in the "good" client, but disagreement as to their relative importance. Preferably it should also be a test that has been used in related research so that comparisons can be made between the results of this study and other results. One test which has been used extensively which not only contains a large number of aspects of personality but also requires the rater to rank them in importance is the Q sort of Block (1961). This test is particularly suitable because it was developed as a diagnostic aid by clinical psychologists, it is therefore

designed specifically for use with clients. It has also been used in research by Bem & Funder (1978). They suggest that in order to make accurate predictions about how an individual would behave in a particular situation it is necessary to work out what all the possible behaviours are, and work out what is the probable personality of the different individuals who would behave in these ways. If the actual personalities of a group of subjects are then measured and compared with the idealised personality profiles, the individual should behave like the idealised person whose personality profile most closely matches his own. In this piece of research the situation is the counselling session, the behaviour being examined is that of "successful" client. There will be different personality profiles for this behaviour depending on which counsellor a client goes to. Clients are randomly assigned to counsellors matched only by time of day the counsellor works and time of day it is convenient for the client to attend. Therefore it should be the case that some clients have personalities which do not closely match the profile of the ideal client of their counsellor. These clients may not stay in counselling as long as the clients whose personality profiles closely match their therapists picture of the "good" client, since they may perceive their therapist as unsympathetic or unhelpful.

Bem and Funder used three situations to test whether this procedure helped them predict the behaviour of particular individuals, children offered immediate reward or a more valued reward after a delay, the prisoners dilemma game and a forced compliance experiment. Interestingly when using the prisoners dilemma game they found that the best predictor of behaviour was the correlation between the idealised

behaviours and the subjects room mates assessment of the subjects personality, not the subjects estimate of his own personality.

It should therefore be possible for the counsellor to use the Q sort test to produce a profile of the man and woman most likely to benefit from her counselling, and to sort the cards to provide a profile of each new client after the end of the first counselling session. When the actual client's profile is compared to the counsellors "ideal client" profile those clients where the match is closest should be the ones who stay in counselling the longest.

The Californian Q Set

Since the Californian Q set items were developed by clinical psychologists to be used by clinically qualified sorters some of the items contain technical words not easily understood by lay people. For this reason Bem when he used the test added an explanatory sentence to some of the items but unfortunately he did not publish what these sentences were. Since American English is slightly different to English English there were also a few items which contained phrases not easily understood by an English reader. Therefore before using the Q set three different people were asked to go through cards with the items written on to pick out those they felt were difficult to understand. As a result 24 of the 100 items were modified. For 9 items an explanation was added underneath the basic statement. For 9 others modifications were made to the NB notes given after some statements. For six of the items minor changes were made in the actual wording of the statement. A complete list of the original statements and any modifications made is given in Appendix I. Each item was then printed on a card with the item number in the right hand bottom corner. Whenever

a subject was given a pack of cards to sort, the cards were shuffled into a different random order. The instructions subjects read before attempting a card sort are given in Appendix II. The subject has to sort the cards into 9 piles ranging from category 1, extremely uncharacteristic of the individual or stereotype being sorted, to category 9, extremely characteristic. The numbers of cards in each pile are predetermined but different, ranging from 5 in categories 1 and 9 to 18 in category 5, so that the subject did not get confused in addition to the printed instructions containing details of the categories, she was given 9 pink cards with the category number and description printed on, together with the number of items to be put in that category.

Method:

The instructions for the Q sort are reproduced in Appendix III of the study. Six female marriage guidance counsellors were asked to make three sorts of the California Q set: to describe the personality of a woman they felt would benefit from their counselling (FC), to describe a man they felt would benefit from their counselling (MC) and to describe the personality of a male counsellor known to them all. Each counsellor was given the 3 tasks in a different order. After a minimum of 2 weeks, the counsellors repeated the exercise with a different ordering of the three tasks. This time limit was considered long enough to ensure that the counsellors had forgotten how they sorted the cards on the first occasion so that good correlations were not produced as a result of remembering the card order from the first sort. Since most counsellors see three new clients a week and these clients continue in counselling for as long as client and counsellor feel it is of benefit, most counsellors will not have more than one new client a month. If

the retest is within a month, therefore, an experienced counsellor is unlikely to have significantly changed her concept of who is likely to benefit from her counselling as a result of inter-acting with new clients. The male counsellor (PS) was chosen as a subject for a card sort for 2 reasons. All of the counsellors knew him roughly equally and all saw him in the same setting - the fortnightly case discussion. There should therefore be consistency in their images of him. If there is less consistency between the counsellors in their images of the male and or female clients most likely to benefit from their counselling, this would suggest that counsellors do indeed have different images of who would benefit from their counselling. It was intended that there should be a second stage to the experiment. Each counsellor would rate all her new clients personalities using the Qsort. Composite Q sorts would be drawn up for each counsellor of the "ideal" male client and the "ideal" female client. The Q sorts of the actual clients would then be compared ;with the relevant composite of their counsellor. Unfortunately it was not possible to proceed to this second stage for reasons which will be given later.

Results

The correlations over time for each counsellor of their images of the male counsellor (P.S), male client (M.C) and female client (F.C) were calculated, see table 4.1. In addition the composite Q sort scores for each counsellor for the personalities of P.S, M.C, and F.C, were calculated, then the correlations between counsellors for the first and second sorts and the composite scores for the personalities of P.S., M.C., and F.C. Finally, using the composite scores the correlations for each counsellor between M.C and F.C,

M.C. and P.S, and F.C. and P.S were calculated, see Appendix IV for a full tabulation of the results.

Table I.1: Correlations between first and second sorts for each counsellor

| | G | H | I | J | K | L |
|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| P.S | 0.66 | 0.50 | 0.67 | 0.73 | 0.76 | 0.67 |
| M.C | 0.36 | 0.54 | 0.43 | 0.75 | 0.76 | 0.79 |
| F.C | 0.00 | 0.62 | 0.47 | 0.66 | 0.74 | 0.73 |

G, H, I, J, K, L are the counsellors taking part in the study. Block uses the Spearman-Brown formula to compute the reliability of a particular composite Q sort (see Appendix IV). If the fomula is used to compute the reliability of a composite Q sort derived from two Q sorts obtained at different times the test retest inter-correlation needs to be 0.6 to give a reliability of 0.75. Therefore 0.6 has been taken as the minimum correlation necessary before two Q sorts of the same individual taken at different points in time can be considered equivalent. Using the criterion it can be seen from table 4.1 that all counsellors have produced at least on Q sort that is reliable over time, but only half of the six counsellors have produced three Q sorts that are reliable over time. In fact, one counsellor (G) has produced a zero Q sort correlation over time for the female client. Using the Q sort data from all of the counsellors the reliability of a composite Q sort is higher for the male counsellor than for the male client or the female client. This does suggest that there is more variability in the counsellors images of "good" male client and "good" female client than in their image of a person known to them all. However, since only three of the counsellors have

adequate reliability over time in all three card sorts, it is only possible to create reliable composite "good" male and female clients for those three. Block has calculated that for the placing of an individual item on a Q sort to be significantly different from the placing of that item in a different Q sort, there should be a difference of three intervals or more. It is possible therefore to list the items for counsellors J, K and L on which there are significant differences between the three counsellors. The items are listed in full in Appendix IV. All three counsellors have at least one most and one least characteristic item which is common to both their "good" male and "good" female clients but no counsellor has an identical set of items for either "good" male or "good" female client. Item 100 (does not vary roles relates to everyone in the same way) is of interest because it is the only item picked out by one counsellor (J) as least characteristic of a "good" client (male) and by another (K) as most characteristic of a "good" client (female). This perhaps reflects different expectations of these two counsellors for male and female behaviour. Although the three counsellors have picked out different most characteristic items they have all picked out items which could also describe a well adjusted person, in other words, some one who might not need counselling in the first place; for example, counsellor L says the "good" male client should be dependable and responsible, giving towards others, have ethically consistent standards and enjoy senuous experiences. However, not all of the least characteristic items which distinguish the three counsellors are simply negative personality characteristics. Counsellor K, for example, thinks charming talkative clients,

whether male or female, are not likely to benefit from her counselling, and counsellor L thinks objective rational people will not benefit from her counselling.

Discussion:

Block states that "the wondrous and well established fact is that the behaviour of a Q sorter is highly repeatable, test retest reliabilities of 0.8 and 0.9 are conventional."

A test retest reliability score of 0.8 calculated by the Spearman Brown formula requires a correlation of 0.67; only ten of the eighteen correlations overtime in this experiment reached this figure. The only evidence Block quotes for his "well established fact" is Frank (1956). However, Frank only uses ten subjects given a single Q sort task which is repeated, and he doesn't say how quickly they were retested. If the time interval was short the subjects may have remembered how they sorted the items on the previous occasion. Frank claims to have obtained test - retest reliability coefficients of 0.93 to 0.97, but it is not clear whether he means correlation coefficients or reliability as obtained from the Spearman Brown formula. In this experiment no correlation or reliability is above 0.87 and most are considerably lower.

In this experiment it is very unlikely that subjects were able to rely on their memory because the tests were at least two weeks apart and on each occasion the subjects did three Q sorts. Many subjects when given the second test commented spontaneously that even if they had wanted to remember how they sorted the cards on the previous occasion they would find it impossible.

The majority of users of the Q sort, including Bem, assume that the test is measuring something stable and reliable

over time, and so they do not bother to administer the test more than once; it is therefore difficult to say whether the high correlations obtained by Frank are merely showing that his subjects had good memories. Taylor (1955) measured students self concepts using his own Q sort, he tested them twice with a week between tests, he found that without psychotherapy the students showed a statistically significant gain in self concept score over time. This would suggest that at least when measuring self concept scores are not always stable over time. However, this apparent improvement in self concept may have been due to subjects deliberately picking more positive items to describe themselves on the second sort rather than a "real" improvement in self concept. The item set contained 120 items half of which had been rated positive and half negative by a panel of judges, it must therefore have been fairly obvious to the subjects which were desirable self description items and which were not, they may have wanted to appear "better" on the second sort or they may have thought that what Taylor wanted of them.

In this study the counsellors were not rating themselves and if they were trying to please the researcher they are more likely to have tried to be consistent in their Q sorting, since this is what the researcher was hoping to find. Results may have been poor in this study because counsellors did not really understand what they were doing, or did not do the task carefully enough. All of the counsellors, however, took plenty of time to do the task and seemed to be putting lots of thought into it, and they all had at least one correlation overtime of more than 0.6; this suggests they did know what they were doing in

terms of understanding the instructions. None of the counsellors objected to doing the task which suggests that they did have an image of who would benefit from their counselling. The pilot study, where counsellors were asked to describe the male and female clients they felt would benefit from their counselling, also showed that counsellors felt comfortable with the idea that they had such an image. The results of this experiment therefore strongly suggest that researchers should not assume the results of a Q sort are stable over time they should test it out first. In therapy studies, particularly there is often the assumption that changes in the clients self concept during therapy, must be due to therapy. This experiment suggests that some subjects might not have a stable self concept over time and so changes could not be attributed solely to therapy.

If the three counsellors whose Q sorts were reliable over time are concentrated on, it is possible to pick out Q sort items on which they differ significantly in the extreme categories. If these 3 counsellors were to do Q sorts on some of their clients the ones the counsellors thought were benefiting from their counselling should have Q sort profiles which correlated more closely to the counsellors picture of who would benefit from their counselling than the Q sort profiles of clients they did not think were benefiting. In addition the Q sort items on which one counsellor differs significantly from the others should occur more often in the same extreme category for a real client who has benefited from her counselling than it occurs for another counsellors clients who have benefited. For example counsellor K has placed item 4 in the least

characteristic category for a male client likely to benefit from her counselling, (is a talkative individual). Neither of the other two counsellors consider this item to be one of the least characteristic items, therefore real clients who have benefitted from K's counselling should be more likely to have this item placed in the least characteristic category than real clients who have benefitted from J or L's counselling. The problem with extending the study in this way is the small numbers of people involved. Only 3 counsellors out of 6 have concepts of clients likely to benefit from their counselling stable enough over time to be worth includingⁱⁿ a further study. Of these 3 one decided to give up counselling just after the second Q sorting session. It would therefore be necessary to start again with a new group of counsellors. They would have to be recruited on the assumption that 50% of them were likely to have unstable images of who would benefit from their counselling. Since the study would stretch over a longer time span than this pilot study it is likely that over a third of the counsellors would give up counselling during the time of the study. In other words to have data from say 10 counsellors, a minimum of 40 counsellors would be needed at the beginning of the study. As the training takes two years, in any particular council as many as half the counsellors are still in training, therefore, between 80 and 100 counsellors would have to be approached to find fully trained counsellors. This is likely to mean approaching around 8 to 10 local councils for permission to ask their counsellors to take part, assuming all the experienced counsellors could agree which is unlikely.

Finding large numbers of counsellors willing to co-operate in a research project run by someone who is a complete stranger to them would be very time consuming and may prove to be impossible.

Initially it was thought that the original group of counsellors plus counsellors from one other case discussion group would be sufficient to gather meaningful data.

It was therefore decided not to pursue this particular avenue of research.

Appendix II

Q Sort Items

The original item from the California Q set is given first and the version used in this experiment second, if no alternative is given the item was used unmodified.

1. Is critical, sceptical, not easily impressed.
2. Is a genuinely dependable and responsible person.
3. Has a wide range of interests. (N.B superficiality or depth of interest is irrelevant here).
4. Is a talkative individual.
5. Behaves in a giving way towards others. (N.B regardless of the motivation involved).
6. Is fastidious.
7. Favours conservative values in a variety of areas.
8. Appears to have a high degree of intellectual capacity. (N.B Whether actualised or not). (N.B Originality is not necessarily assumed).

Basic statement unchanged bracketed statements replaced by - (N.B Actual academic achievement is irrelevant and originality is not assumed).

9. Is uncomfortable with uncertainty and complexities.
10. Anxiety and tension find outlet in bodily symptoms. (N.B If placed high implies bodily dysfunction; if placed low implies absence of autonomic arousal).

N.B replaced by (N.B If placed low item implies absence of physical reaction to anxiety).

11. Is protective of those close to him. (N.B Placement of this term expresses behaviour ranging from over protection through appropriate nurturance to a laissez-faire, under protective manner).

N.B replaced by (N.B If placed high item implies over protection if placed low item implies under protection.)

12. Tends to be self defensive.
13. Is thin skinned; sensitive to anything that can be construed as criticism or an interpersonal slight.
An interpersonal slight is replaced by a personal slight.
14. Genuinely submissive, accepts domination comfortably.
15. Is skilled in social techniques of imaginative play, pretending and humour.

16. Is introspective and concerned with self as an object. (N.B Introspectiveness per se does not imply accurate insight).

N.B. replaced by - (Introspective means looking inwards to own thoughts and feelings). (N.B. This item does not imply accurate insight).

17. Behaves in a sympathetic or considerate manner.

18. Initiates humour.

19. Seeks reassurance from others.

20. Has a rapid personal tempo behaves and acts quickly.

21. Arouses nurturant feelings in others.

As above plus (Nurture means to care for or nourish).

22. Feels a lack of personal meaning in life.

23. Extrapunitive, tends to transfer or project blame.

As above plus - i.e. Blames others for own misfortunes.

24. Prides self on being objective, rational.

25. Tends toward over control of needs and impulses; binds tensions excessively; delays gratification unnecessarily.

As above but with binds tensions excessively; removed.

26. Is productive gets things done.

27. Shows condescending behaviour in relations with others. (N.B. Extreme placement toward uncharacteristic end implies simply an absence of condescension, not necessarily equalitarianism or inferiority).

As above but N.B statement removed.

28. Tends to arouse liking and acceptance in people.

29. Is turned to for advice and reassurance.

30. Gives up and withdraws where possible in the face of frustration and adversity. (N.B If placed high, implies generally defeatist; if placed low, implies counteractive).

N.B replaced by - (N.B If placed low item means attempts to combat frustration and adversity).

31. Regards self as physically attractive.

32. Seems to be aware of the impression he makes on others.

33. Is calm, relaxed in manner.

34. Over reactive to minor frustrations, irritable.

35. Has warmth, has the capacity for close relationships, compassionate.

36. Is subtly negativistic, tends to undermine and obstruct or sabotage.

37. Is guileful and deceitful, manipulative, opportunistic.
38. Has hostility towards others. (N.B Basic hostility is intended here, mode of expression is to be indicated by other items).
39. Thinks and associates ideas in unusual ways, has unconventional thought processes.
40. Is vulnerable to real or fancied threat, generally fearful.
41. Is moralistic. (N.B Regardless of the particular nature of the moral code.
42. Reluctant to commit self to any definite course of action, tends to delay or avoid action.
43. Is facially and/or gesturally expressive.
44. Evaluates the motivation of others in interpreting situations. (N.B. Accuracy of evaluation is not assumed). (N.B. again. Extreme placement in one direction implies preoccupation with motivational interpretation: at the other extreme, the item implies a psychological obtuseness, S does not consider motivational factors).
45. Has a brittle ego-defence system, has a small reserve of integration, would be disorganised and maladaptive when under stress or trauma.

The same + i.e. Copes badly with stress.
46. Engages in personal fantasy and daydreams, fictional speculations.
47. Has a readiness to feel guilt. (N.B. Regardless of whether verbalised or not).
48. Keeps people at a distance, avoids close interpersonal relationships.
49. Is basically distrustful of people in general, questions their motivations.
50. Is unpredictable and changeable in behaviour and attitudes.
51. Genuinely values intellectual and cognitive matters. (N.B Ability or achievement are not implied here).

As above but, 'and cognitive' has been removed.
52. Behaves in an assertive fashion. (N.B. Item 14 reflects underlying submissiveness this refers to over behaviour).
53. Various needs tend towards relatively direct and uncontrolled expression, unable to delay gratification.
54. Emphasises being with others, gregarious.
55. Is self defeating.

56. Responds to humour.
57. Is an interesting, arresting person.
58. Enjoys senuous experiences. (Includes touch, taste, smell, physical contact).
59. Is concerned with own body and the adequacy of its physiological functioning.
60. Has insight into own motives and behaviour.
61. Creates and exploits dependency in people. (N.B. Regardless of the techniques employed, e.g. punitiveness, over indulgence). (N.B At the other end of scale, item implies respecting and encouraging the independence and individuality of others).
N.B's replaced by - (N.B Regardless of the techniques employed, if placed low item implies respecting and encouraging the independence and individuality of others).
62. Tends to be rebellious and non conforming.
63. Judges self and others in conventional terms like "popularity", "the correct thing to do", social pressures etc.
64. Is socially perceptive of a wide range of interpersonal cues.
As above + i.e. notices how people react to each other.
65. Characteristically pushes and tries to stretch limits, sees what he can get away with.
66. Enjoys aesthetic impressions; is aesthetically reactive. As above + (aesthetic means an appreciation of beauty)..
67. Is self indulgent.
68. Is basically anxious.
69. Is sensitive to anything that can be construed as a demand. (N.B. No implication of the kind of subsequent response is intended here).
70. Behaves in an ethically consistent manner, is consistent with own personal standards.
71. Has high aspiration level for self.
72. Concerned with own adequacy as a person either at conscious or unconscious levels. (N.B. A clinical judgment is required here item 74 reflects subjective satisfaction with self).
As above but N.B deleted.
73. Tends to perceive many different contexts in sexual terms, eroticises situations.
74. Is subjectively unaware of self concern, feels satisfied with self.

75. Has a clear cut internally consistent personality. (N.B. Amount of information available before sorting is not intended here).
76. Tends to project own feelings and motivations onto others.
77. Appears straightforward, forthright, candid in dealing with others.
78. Feels cheated and victimised by life, self-pitying.
79. Tends to ruminate and have persistent preoccupying thoughts.
80. Interested in members of the opposite sex. (N.B. At opposite end, item implies absence of such interest).
81. Is physically attractive, good-looking. (N.B. The cultural criterion is to be applied here).
82. Has fluctuating moods.
83. Able to see to the heart of important problems.
84. Is cheerful. (N.B. Extreme placement towards uncharacteristic end of continuum unhappiness or depression).
85. Emphasises communication through action and non verbal behaviour.
86. Handles anxiety and conflicts by, in effect, refusing to recognise their presence; repressive or dissociative tendencies.

As above but 'repressive or dissociative tendencies' is omitted.
87. Interprets basically simple and clear cut situations in complicated and particularising ways.
88. Is personally charming.
89. Compares self to others. Is alert to real or fancied differences between self and other people.
90. Is concerned with philosophical problems, e.g. religions, values, the meaning of life etc.
91. Is power oriented, values power in self and others.
92. Has social poise and presence, appears socially at ease.
93. (a) Behaves in a masculine style and manner.
(b) Behaves in a feminine style and manner. (N.B. If subject is male, 93a applies, if subject is female, 93b is to be evaluated). (N.B. again. The cultural or sub-cultural conception is to be applied as a criterion).

For male subjects; Behaves in a masculine style and manner. For female subjects; Behaves in a feminine

style and manner. (N.B The cultural or sub cultural conception is to be applied as criterion).

- 94. Expresses hostile feelings directly.
- 95. Tends to proffer advice.
Tends to offer advice.
- 96. Values own independence and autonomy.
As above + (autonomy means personal freedom).
- 97. Is emotionally bland, has flattened affect.
As above + i.e. appears unaffected by emotional happenings.
- 98. Is verbally fluent, can express ideas well.
- 99. Is self dramatising, histrionic.
As above + i.e. over reacts.
- 100. Does not vary roles relates to everyone in the same way.

Appendix III

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE CALIFORNIA Q SET

With the individual to be "formulated" in mind, look through the 100 cards. You are to sort these statements into a row of nine categories placing at one end of the row those cards you consider most characteristic with respect to the subject and at the other end those cards you believe to be most uncharacteristic with reference to the subject.

A convenient method of sorting is to first form three stacks of cards - those items considered characteristic being placed on one side, those items considered uncharacteristic being placed on the other side, and those cards remaining falling in between. No attention need be paid to the number of cards falling into each of these three groupings at this time. When the three piles of cards have been established, they may be further fractionated, this time into their proper proportions.

The number of cards to be placed in each category are:-

| <u>CATEGORY</u> | <u>NUMBER OF CARDS</u> | <u>LABEL OF CATEGORY</u> |
|-----------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 9 | 5 | Extremely characteristic |
| 8 | 8 | Quite characteristic |
| 7 | 12 | Fairly characteristic |
| 6 | 16 | Somewhat characteristic |
| 5 | 18 | Relatively neutral or unimportant |
| 4 | 16 | Somewhat uncharacteristic |
| 3 | 12 | Fairly uncharacteristic |
| 2 | 8 | Quite uncharacteristic |
| 1 | 5 | Extremely uncharacteristic |

Appendix IV

Q Sort Correlations

The correlations were calculated using the formula

$$r = 1 - \frac{\sum d_{ip}^2}{2N\sigma_0^2}$$

where d_{ip} = squared difference between the Q values of corresponding items

N = number of items in the Q set i.e. 100

σ_0 = standard deviation of the Q set = 2.08

The formula then becomes $r = 1 - \frac{\sum d_{ip}^2}{864}$

Table 1: Correlations between first and second sorts for each counsellor

| | G | H | I | J | K | L |
|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| P.S | 0.66 | 0.50 | 0.67 | 0.73 | 0.76 | 0.67 |
| M.C | 0.36 | 0.54 | 0.43 | 0.75 | 0.76 | 0.79 |
| F.C | 0.00 | 0.62 | 0.47 | 0.66 | 0.74 | 0.73 |

G, H, I, J, K, L are the counsellors taking part in the study.

P.S. Is the male counsellor

M.C. Is the male client likely to benefit from counselling.

F.C Is the female client likely to benefit from counselling

Table 2: Correlations between counsellors on the first and second sorts for the personality of PS

| | G | H | I | J | K | L | 1st sort |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------|
| G | — | 0.29 | 0.36 | 0.42 | 0.40 | 0.40 | |
| H | 0.34 | - | 0.24 | 0.33 | 0.45 | 0.39 | |
| I | 0.47 | 0.24 | - | 0.66 | 0.63 | 0.39 | |
| J | 0.49 | 0.30 | 0.53 | - | 0.60 | 0.34 | |
| K | 0.50 | 0.29 | 0.44 | 0.44 | - | 0.45 | |
| L | 0.62 | 0.36 | 0.51 | 0.54 | 0.48 | - | |

2nd sort

Table 3: Correlations between counsellors for the personality of PS using a composite of the first and second sorts of each counsellor

| | G | H | I | J | K |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|
| H | 0.42 | — | — | — | — |
| I | 0.49 | 0.36 | — | — | — |
| J | 0.50 | 0.35 | 0.69 | — | — |
| K | 0.52 | 0.49 | 0.56 | 0.55 | — |
| L | 0.57 | 0.52 | 0.53 | 0.46 | 0.55 |

Table 4: Correlations between counsellors on the first and second sorts for the personality of MC

| | G | H | I | J | K | L | 1st sort |
|---|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|
| G | - | -0.13 | -0.05 | -0.05 | -0.13 | -0.20 | |
| H | 0.11 | - | 0.40 | 0.56 | 0.57 | 0.53 | |
| I | 0.44 | 0.36 | - | 0.51 | 0.52 | 0.59 | |
| J | 0.27 | 0.54 | 0.46 | - | 0.48 | 0.59 | |
| K | 0.09 | 0.44 | 0.26 | 0.59 | - | 0.60 | |
| L | 0.25 | 0.47 | 0.27 | 0.57 | 0.63 | - | |

2nd sort

Table 5: Correlations between counsellors for the personality of M.C using a composite of the first and second sorts of each counsellor

| | G | H | I | J | K |
|---|--------|------|------|------|------|
| H | - 0.07 | - | - | - | - |
| I | 0.13 | 0.44 | - | - | - |
| J | 0.35 | 0.62 | 0.59 | - | - |
| K | 0.00 | 0.51 | 0.52 | 0.63 | - |
| L | 0.02 | 0.58 | 0.53 | 0.64 | 0.67 |

Table 6: Correlations between counsellors on the first and second sorts for the personality of F.C

| | G | H | I | J | K | L | 1st sort |
|---|------|-------|------|------|-------|------|-------------|
| G | - | -0.13 | 0.05 | 0.10 | -0.08 | 0.03 | |
| H | 0.23 | - | 0.30 | 0.33 | 0.40 | 0.31 | |
| I | 0.26 | 0.31 | - | 0.40 | 0.15 | 0.39 | |
| J | 0.26 | 0.50 | 0.52 | - | 0.38 | 0.47 | |
| K | 0.31 | 0.44 | 0.25 | 0.46 | - | 0.56 | |
| L | 0.29 | 0.41 | 0.26 | 0.46 | 0.67 | - | 2nd sort |

Table 7: Correlations between counsellors for the personality of F.C using a composite of the first and second sorts of each counsellor

| | G | H | I | J | K |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|
| H | 0.04 | - | - | - | - |
| I | 0.17 | 0.56 | - | - | - |
| J | 0.11 | 0.47 | 0.54 | - | - |
| K | 0.20 | 0.43 | 0.27 | 0.44 | - |
| L | 0.23 | 0.42 | 0.41 | 0.55 | 0.67 |

Table 8: Correlations between P.S. M.C & F.C for each counsellor using a composite of the first and second sorts

| | G | H | I | J | K | L |
|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|
| MC/FC | 0.36 | 0.69 | 0.70 | 0.82 | 0.82 | 0.82 |
| MC/PS | -0.17 | 0.28 | 0.46 | 0.59 | 0.52 | 0.24 |
| FC/PS | 0.05 | 0.10 | 0.14 | 0.47 | 0.64 | 0.25 |

Spearman-Brown formula for the reliability fo a composite Q sort.

Reliability of composite = $\frac{N \text{ (av. interjudge correlation)}}{1 + (N - 1) \text{ (av. interjudge correlation)}}$

where N = number of Judges contributing to the composite.

Table 9: Reliability of composite Q sets of the first sort, second sort and counsellors composite sorts and the actual correlation of the first and second sort composite Q sets for P.S., M.C., & F.C.

| | 1st sort | 2nd sort | composite | correlation |
|------|----------|----------|-----------|-------------|
| P.S | 0.82 | 0.82 | 0.86 | 0.87 |
| M.C. | 0.74 | 0.79 | 0.81 | 0.81 |
| F.C | 0.64 | 0.78 | 0.78 | 0.81 |

Appendix V

Differences between counsellors

A. Man most likely to benefit from counselling.

1. Least characteristic items (categories 1 & 2) on which counsellors differ significantly from at least one other counsellor.

K 4, 31, 45, 82, 88, 99,

L 24, 52, 90, 91,

J 13, 49, 74, 100

2. Most characteristic items (categories 8 & 9) on which counsellors differ significantly from at least one other counsellor.

K 58, 64, 70, 73, 83,

L 2, 5, 58, 70,

J 10, 71, 72, 83,

B. Woman most likely to benefit from counselling.

1. Least characteristic items (categories 1 & 2) on which counsellors differ significantly from at least one other counsellor.

K 4, 38, 50, 79, 82, 88, 99,

L 1, 24, 63, 90, 95, 99,

J 1, 49, 55, 61, 74, 78, 91,

2. Most characteristic items (categories 8 & 9) on which counsellors differ significantly from at least one other counsellor.

K 17, 60, 70, 75, 83, 100,

L 2, 70, 75,

J 15, 19, 32, 46, 71, 98,

Appendix VI

Tabulations of the agreement between raters when analysing transcripts of counselling sessions for attributions. The order of presentation of the tabulations is the order of analysis of the transcripts.

J is the researcher

M is the independent rater

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|----------|-------------------------|----------|----------|
| Mrs A | | 16 Pages | Total client Atts. | | 89 |
| <u>No of Atts</u> | | | <u>No of Atts</u> | | |
| Complete agree- ment | | 26 | Minor Diffs | | 29 |
| Major Diffs | M | 51 | Inc in final version | M | 31 (61%) |
| | J | 20 | | J | 7 (35%) |
| Attributions | Final Version | | M | J | |
| Self | 26 (29%) | | 22 (23%) | 25 (33%) | |
| Husband | 54 (61%) | | 64 (67%) | 46 (61%) | |
| Joint | 8 (9%) | | 10 (10%) | 3 (4%) | |
| Family | 1 (1%) | | - | 1 (1%) | |
| Counsellor | 4 | | 4 | 1 | |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Mrs B | 17 Pages | Total Client Atts | 55 |
| | <u>No. of Atts</u> | | <u>No of Atts</u> |
| Complete Agree- ment | 18 | Minor Diffs | 14 |
| Major Diffs | M 27 | Inc in final | M 20 (74%) |
| | J 18 | version | J 10 (56%) |
| Attributions | Final Version | M | J |
| Self | 28 (51%) | 29 (55%) | 24 (56%) |
| Husband | 8 (15%) | 6 (11%) | 7 (16%) |
| Joint | 6 (11%) | 4 (8%) | 3 (7%) |
| Family | 13 (24%) | 14 (26%) | 9 (21%) |
| Counsellor | 7 | 7 | 6 |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------------|-------------------|----|-------------------|----------|
| Mrs C | 35 Pages | | Total Client Atts | | 124 | |
| | | <u>No of Atts</u> | | | <u>No of Atts</u> | |
| Complete Agree- ment | | 29 | Minor Diffs | | 67 | |
| Major Diffs | M | 79 | Inc in Final | | 44 | (56%) |
| | J | 27 | version | | 17 | (63%) |
| Attributions | | Final Version | | M | J | |
| Self | | 42 | (34%) | 44 | (31%) | 42 (42%) |
| Husband | | 61 | (49%) | 80 | (57%) | 46 (46%) |
| Joint | | 21 | (17%) | 17 | (12%) | 13 (13%) |
| Family | | - | | - | | - |
| Counsellor | | 28 | | 21 | | 25 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Mrs D | | 22 Pages | Total Client Atts | 69 |
| | | <u>No of Atts</u> | | <u>No of Atts</u> |
| Complete Agree- ment | 12 | Minor Diffs | 20 | |
| Major Diffs | M 48 | Inc in Final | 37 (64%) | |
| | J 18 | version | 9 (50%) | |
| Attributions | Final Version | | M | J |
| Self | 22 (32%) | | 19 (25%) | 20 (44%) |
| Husband | 29 (42%) | | 33 (43%) | 23 (51%) |
| Joint | 17 (25%) | | 22 ((29%) | 1 (2%) |
| Family | 1 (1%) | | 3 (4%) | 1 (2%) |
| Counsellor | 8 | | 8 | 4 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Mrs E | | 23 Pages | Total Client Atts | 124 |
| | | <u>No of Atts</u> | | <u>No of Atts</u> |
| Complete Agree- ment | 37 | Minor Diffs | 54 | |
| Major Diffs | M 38 | Inc in Final | 21 (55%) | |
| | J 42 | Version | 29 (69%) | |
| Attributions | Final Version | | M | J |
| Self | 55 (44%) | | 41 (37%) | 59 (48%) |
| Husband | 50 (40%) | | 44 (40%) | 56 (46%) |
| Joint | 19 (15%) | | 25 (23%) | 8 (7%) |
| Family | - | | - | - |
| Counsellor | 15 | | 16 | 11 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------|----------|
| Mrs F | 20 Pages | Total Client atts | 78 |
| <u>No of Atts</u> | | <u>No of Atts</u> | |
| Complete Agree- ment | 24 | Minor Diffs | 14 |
| Major Diffs | M 63 | Inc in Final | 48 (76%) |
| | J 21 | version | 10 (48%) |
| Attributions | Final Version | M | J |
| Self | 39 (50%) | 33 (42%) | 28 (54%) |
| Husband | 21 (27%) | 21 (27%) | 12 (23%) |
| Joint | 18 (23%) | 24 (31%) | 12 (23%) |
| Family | - | - | - |
| Counsellor | 16 | 19 | 6 |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|----|-------------------|----------|----------|
| Mrs G | 15 Pages | | Total Client Atts | | 42 |
| <u>No of Atts</u> | | | <u>No of Atts</u> | | |
| Complete Agree- ment | | 17 | Minor Diffs | | 21 |
| Major Diffs | M | 25 | Inc in Final | | 13 (52%) |
| | J | 10 | version | | 6 (60%) |
| Attributions | Final Version | | M | J | |
| Self | 17 (40%) | | 20 (44%) | 11 (33%) | |
| Husband | 14 (33%) | | 15 (33%) | 14 (42%) | |
| Joint | 11 (26%) | | 10 (22%) | 8 (24%) | |
| Family | - | | - | - | |
| Counsellor | 16 | | 17 | 14 | |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|----|-------------------|-------------------|---------|
| Mrs H | 11 Pages | | Total Client Atts | | 24 |
| | <u>No of Atts</u> | | | <u>No of Atts</u> | |
| Complete Agree- ment | | 14 | Minor Diffs | | 7 |
| Major Diffs | M | 12 | Inc in Final | | 8 (67%) |
| | J | 4 | version | | 2 (50%) |
| Attributions | Final Version | | M | J | |
| Self | 15 (63%) | | 11 (55%) | 13 (65%) | |
| Husband | 3 (13%) | | 3 (15%) | 3 (15%) | |
| Joint | 4 (17%) | | 4 (20%) | 4 (20%) | |
| Family | 2 (8%) | | 2 (10%) | - | |
| Counsellor | 7 | | 10 | 5 | |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|----|-------------------|-------------------|----------|-------|
| Mrs I | 28 Pages | | Total Client Atts | | 72 | |
| | <u>No of Atts</u> | | | <u>No of Atts</u> | | |
| Complete Agree- ment | | 15 | | Minor Diffs | 21 | - |
| Major Diffs | M | 55 | | Inc in Final | 35 | (64%) |
| | J | 10 | | version | 6 | (60%) |
| | | | | | | |
| Attributions | Final Version | | M | | J | |
| Self | 36 (50%) | | 42 (50%) | | 25 (56%) | |
| Husband | 26 (36%) | | 32 (38%) | | 13 (29%) | |
| Joint | 10 (14%) | | 10 (12%) | | 7 (16%) | |
| Family | - | | - | | - | |
| Counsellor | 3 | | 4 | | 1 | |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Mrs J | | 26 Pages | Total Client Atts | 62 |
| | | <u>No of Atts</u> | | <u>No of Atts</u> |
| Complete Agree- ment | 13 | Minor Diffs | | 21 |
| Major Diffs | M 35 | Inc in Final | | 21 (60%) |
| | J 13 | version | | 8 (62%) |
| Attributions | Final Version | | M | J |
| Self | 33 (53%) | | 33 (58%) | 13 (35%) |
| Husband | 22 (35%) | | 24 (42%) | 18 (49%) |
| Joint | 7 (11%) | | | 6 (16%) |
| Family | - | | - | - |
| Counsellor | 1 | | 1 | 1 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Mr K | | 18 Pages | Total Client Atts | 65 |
| | | <u>No of Atts</u> | | <u>No of Atts</u> |
| Complete Agree- ment | 19 | Minor Diffs | | 33 |
| Major Diffs | M 30 | Inc in Final | | 18 (60%) |
| | J 17 | version | | 13 (76%) |
| Attributions | Final Version | | M | J |
| Self | 22 (34%) | | 20 (30%) | 19 (38%) |
| Wife | 35 (54%) | | 38 (58%) | 24 (48%) |
| Joint | 8 (12%) | | 8 (12%) | 7 (14%) |
| Family | - | | - | - |
| Counsellor | 17 | | 15 | 15 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------|----------|
| Mr L | 16 Pages | Total Client Atts | 56 |
| <u>No of Atts</u> | | <u>No of Atts</u> | |
| Complete Agree- ment | 17 | Minor Diffs | 13 |
| Major Diffs | M 47 | Inc in Final | 26 (55%) |
| | J 8 | version | 4 (50%) |
| Attributions | Final Version | M | J |
| Self | 30 (54%) | 32 (44%) | 20 (54%) |
| Wife | 21 (38%) | 30 (42%) | 13 (35%) |
| Joint | 5 (9%) | 10 (14%) | 4 (11%) |
| Family | - | - | - |
| Counsellor | 4 | 4 | 4 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------|----------|
| Mr M | 18 Pages | Total Client Atts | 50 |
| <u>No of Atts</u> | | <u>No of Atts</u> | |
| Complete Agree- ment | 15 | Minor Diffs | 15 |
| Major Diffs | M 33 | Inc in final | 19 (58%) |
| | J 5 | version | 2 (40%) |
| Attributions | Final Version | M | J |
| Self | 36 (72%) | 41 (72%) | 25 (76%) |
| Wife | 7 (14%) | 9 (16%) | 4 (12%) |
| Joint | 7 (14%) | 7 (12%) | 4 (12%) |
| Family | - | - | - |
| Counsellor | 5 | 6 | 3 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Mr N | | 19 Pages | Total Client Atts | 64 |
| | | <u>No of Atts</u> | | <u>No of Atts</u> |
| Complete Agree- ment | 16 | Minor Diffs | 24 | |
| Major Diffs | M 54 | Inc in final | 31 (57%) | |
| | J 4 | version | 1 (25%) | |
| Attributions | Final Version | | M | J |
| Self | 42 (66%) | | 49 (63%) | 21 (66%) |
| Wife | 12 (19%) | | 14 (18%) | 8 (25%) |
| Joint | 10 (16%) | | 13 (17%) | 3 (9%) |
| Family | - | | 2 (3%) | - |
| Counsellor | 8 | | 12 | 7 |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Mr & Mrs O | | 32 Pages | Total Client Atts | Mr O 25 | Mrs O 32 |
| | | <u>No of Atts</u> | | <u>No of Atts</u> | |
| Complete Agree- ment | 17 | Minor Diffs | 17 | | |
| Major Diffs | M 39 | Inc in final | 26 (67%) | | |
| | J 18 | version | 12 (67%) | | |
| Attributions | Final Version | | M | J | |
| Mr O Self | 25 (100%) | | 26 (100%) | 22 (100%) | |
| Wife | - | | - | - | |
| Joint | - | | - | - | |
| Family | - | | - | - | |
| Mrs O Self | 19 (59%) | | 20 (61%) | 13 (57%) | |
| Husband | 6 (19%) | | 7 (21%) | 5 (22%) | |
| Joint | 5 (16%) | | 5 (15%) | 5 (22%) | |
| Family | 2 (6%) | | 1 (3%) | - | |
| Counsellor | 15 | | 14 | 8 | |

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------|-------------------|----|-------------------|--|-------------------|-------|
| Mr & Mrs P | | 18 Pages | | Total Client Atts | | Mr P | Mrs P |
| | | | | | | 27 | 37 |
| | | <u>No of Atts</u> | | | | <u>No of Atts</u> | |
| Complete Agree- ment | | 14 | | Minor Diffs | | 15 | |
| Major Diffs | | M | 71 | Inc in Final | | 47 | (67%) |
| | | J | 5 | version | | 4 | (80%) |
| Attributions | | Final Version | | M | | J | |
| Mr P | Self | 19 (70%) | | 23 (66%) | | 8 (62%) | |
| | Wife | 5 (19%) | | 8 (23%) | | 4 (31%) | |
| | Joint | 3 (11%) | | 4 (11%) | | 1 (8%) | |
| | Family | - | | | | | |
| Mrs P | Self | 12 (32%) | | 15 (38%) | | 5 (29%) | |
| | Husband | 22 (59%) | | 19 (48%) | | 12 (71%) | |
| | Joint | 3 (8%) | | 6 (15%) | | - | |
| | Family | - | | - | | - | |
| Counsellor | | 15 | | 20 | | 4 | |

| | | | |
|------------|----------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Mr & Mrs X | 20 Pages | Total Client Atts | Mr X 33 Mrs X 13 |
|------------|----------|-------------------|---------------------|

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| | <u>No of Atts</u> | | <u>No of Atts</u> |
| Complete Agree-ment | 16 | Minor Diffs | 13 |
| Major Diffs | M 71 | Inc in final | 36 (51%) |
| | J 6 | version | 5 (83%) |

| Attributions | Final Version | M | J |
|--------------|---------------|----------|---------|
| Mr X Self | 17 (52%) | 15 (35%) | 6 (46%) |
| Wife | 12 (36%) | 12 (28%) | 5 (38%) |
| Joint | 1 (3%) | 6 (14%) | 2 (15%) |
| Family | 3 (9%) | 10 (23%) | - |
| Mrs X Self | 9 (69%) | 14 (70%) | 4 (67%) |
| Husband | 1 (8%) | 2 (10%) | - |
| Joint | 2 (15%) | 2 (10%) | 1 (17%) |
| Family | 1 (8%) | 2 (10%) | 1 (17%) |
| Counsellor | 29 | 40 | 19 |

| | | | |
|-------|----------|-------------------|----|
| Mrs Y | 20 Pages | Total Client Atts | 47 |
|-------|----------|-------------------|----|

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| | <u>No of Atts</u> | | <u>No of Atts</u> |
| Complete Agree-ment | 15 | Minor Diffs | 20 |
| Major Diffs | M 69 | Inc in final | 43 (62%) |
| | J 13 | version | 5 (38%) |

| Attributions | Final Version | M | J |
|--------------|---------------|----------|----------|
| Self | 25 (53%) | 40 (56%) | 25 (63%) |
| Husband | 13 (28%) | 20 (28%) | 12 (30%) |
| Joint | 8 (17%) | 10 (14%) | 3 (8%) |
| Family | 1 (2%) | 1 (1%) | - |
| Counsellor | 23 | 34 | 10 |

Appendix VII

Classification of attributions version 4

1. Statements about the personality or disposition or self or partner.
e.g. He is normally very calm
I am quite intelligent really
2. An explanation of the behaviour of self or partner in terms of the situation they are in. This includes factors such as poor health which happen to the person and are not directly under their control.
e.g. It wasn't his fault he was late home on that occasion the train broke down.
The tablets make me so sleepy I can't seem to get anything done.
3. A statement about expectancy there are 2 forms -
(a) an assertion about what they or their partner should or should not do either explicitly or by implication.
e.g. I want my husband to take a more active part in caring for the baby.
My husband doesn't help me much with the children
(b) A more generalised social expectancy statement about appropriate behaviour in the circumstances.
e.g. husbands normally take an active part in caring for their children.
4. A statement about attitudes towards self or spouse or activities of self or spouse or spouses perceived attitudes to self or partner or self or partner's behaviour.
e.g. He may treat me badly but I still love him.
He hates me doing housework at the weekends when he's at home.
I don't like it when he comes home late without letting me know first.

Attitudes are sometimes difficult to distinguish from expectations as a general rule expectations contain words like ought should want, expect i.e. obligation words. Attitude statements contain emotion words like love, like, hate upset etc.

5. Statements of motivation or intention of self or spouse to behave in a particular way to avoid or achieve a particular outcome. The intention may or may not be carried out and may or may not succeed

e.g. He only does it to annoy me

I try to make him lose his temper but he never does.

Sometimes the speaker is not sure of what they are saying and the attribution contains words and phrases such as I'm not sure but, I think, perhaps, maybe, the presence of these words or phrases does not influence the category of the attribution.

Appendix VIII

Tabulations of the agreement between the raters when categorising the attributions to self or partner made by each client.

R,M,S,C are the independent raters.

- J. is the researcher.
- 1. is Personality attributions.
- 2. is Situational attributions.
- 3. is Expectancy attributions.
- 4. is Attitude attributions.
- 5. is Motivation attributions.

| Mrs. A | SELF | | | | | | HUSBAND | | | | | |
|------------|------|---|----|----|----|-------|---------|----|----|----|---|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| R | - | 4 | 9 | 8 | 5 | 26 | 5 | 9 | 10 | 29 | 1 | 54 |
| J | 3 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 10 | 26 | 7 | 3 | 15 | 25 | 4 | 54 |
| M | 3 | 1 | 6 | 10 | 6 | 26 | 7 | 3 | 16 | 26 | 2 | 54 |
| S | 2 | 2 | 9 | 13 | - | 26 | 1 | 10 | 21 | 21 | 1 | 54 |
| C | 2 | 2 | 10 | 12 | - | 26 | 5 | 3 | 19 | 26 | 1 | 54 |
| Agreed Set | 2 | 2 | 9 | 9 | 3 | 25 | 3 | 5 | 15 | 22 | - | 45 |
| R | - | 2 | 7 | 7 | 3 | 19 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 17 | - | 32 |
| J | 2 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 15 | 3 | 2 | 12 | 19 | - | 36 |
| M | 2 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 19 | 3 | 3 | 13 | 20 | - | 39 |
| S | 2 | 1 | 9 | 9 | - | 21 | 1 | 5 | 13 | 16 | - | 35 |
| C | 2 | 2 | 8 | 9 | - | 21 | 3 | 2 | 11 | 17 | - | 33 |

| Mrs. B | SELF | | | | | | HUSBAND | | | | | |
|------------|------|----|---|---|---|-------|---------|---|---|---|---|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| R | 3 | 12 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 28 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | - | 8 |
| J | 4 | 12 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 28 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 8 |
| M | 3 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 4 | 28 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | - | 8 |
| S | - | 14 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 28 | - | 2 | 2 | 4 | - | 8 |
| C | 5 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 28 | - | 1 | 3 | 4 | - | 8 |
| Agreed Set | 4 | 12 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 25 | - | 1 | 2 | 4 | - | 7 |
| R | 3 | 10 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 21 | - | 1 | 2 | 3 | - | 6 |
| J | 4 | 10 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 22 | - | 1 | 1 | 2 | - | 4 |
| M | 3 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 18 | - | 1 | 1 | 4 | - | 6 |
| S | - | 11 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 17 | - | 1 | 2 | 4 | - | 7 |
| C | 4 | 11 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 20 | - | 1 | 2 | 4 | - | 7 |

| Mrs. C | SELF | | | | | | HUSBAND | | | | | |
|------------|------|---|----|----|---|-------|---------|----|----|----|----|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| R | 1 | 8 | 8 | 20 | 5 | 42 | 4 | 9 | 8 | 35 | 5 | 61 |
| J | 1 | 8 | 12 | 15 | 6 | 42 | 2 | 6 | 18 | 16 | 19 | 61 |
| M | 2 | 4 | 23 | 13 | - | 42 | 5 | 4 | 24 | 23 | 5 | 61 |
| S | - | 7 | 22 | 12 | 1 | 42 | 1 | 20 | 27 | 8 | 5 | 61 |
| C | 3 | 7 | 23 | 9 | - | 42 | - | 12 | 18 | 24 | 7 | 61 |
| Agreed Set | 1 | 6 | 18 | 13 | - | 38 | 1 | 10 | 15 | 15 | 3 | 44 |
| R | 1 | 5 | 8 | 12 | - | 26 | 1 | 8 | 5 | 10 | 2 | 26 |
| J | 1 | 6 | 11 | 10 | - | 28 | - | 5 | 11 | 12 | 3 | 31 |
| M | 1 | 4 | 17 | 8 | - | 30 | 1 | 4 | 12 | 14 | 3 | 34 |
| S | - | 6 | 17 | 9 | - | 32 | 1 | 9 | 14 | 6 | 3 | 33 |
| C | 1 | 6 | 17 | 8 | - | 32 | - | 8 | 11 | 14 | 3 | 36 |

| Mrs. D | SELF | | | | | | HUSBAND | | | | | |
|------------|------|---|----|---|---|-------|---------|---|----|----|---|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| R | 2 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 6 | 22 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 30 |
| J | 2 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 22 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 15 | 5 | 30 |
| M | 3 | 1 | 12 | 5 | 1 | 22 | 2 | 1 | 10 | 15 | 2 | 30 |
| S | 2 | 2 | 15 | 2 | 1 | 22 | 1 | 9 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 30 |
| C | 3 | 1 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 22 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 17 | 3 | 30 |
| Agreed Set | 2 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 19 | 1 | 4 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 26 |
| R | 2 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 12 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 16 |
| J | 2 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 13 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 21 |
| M | 2 | 1 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 16 | - | 1 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 17 |
| S | 2 | - | 8 | 2 | - | 12 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 18 |
| C | 2 | - | 7 | 6 | - | 15 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 17 |

| Mrs. E | SELF | | | | | | HUSBAND | | | | | |
|------------|------|----|----|----|----|-------|---------|---|---|----|----|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| R | 7 | 12 | 9 | 19 | 8 | 55 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 39 | 1 | 50 |
| J | 7 | 4 | 9 | 20 | 15 | 55 | 12 | 5 | 2 | 20 | 11 | 50 |
| M | 7 | 4 | 17 | 14 | 13 | 55 | 12 | 1 | 8 | 26 | 3 | 50 |
| S | 2 | 11 | 11 | 24 | 7 | 55 | 8 | 8 | 4 | 23 | 7 | 50 |
| C | 13 | 7 | 19 | 11 | 5 | 55 | 14 | 2 | 6 | 27 | 1 | 50 |
| Agreed Set | 4 | 5 | 10 | 14 | 11 | 44 | 10 | 2 | 1 | 27 | 3 | 43 |
| R | 4 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 5 | 28 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 26 | 1 | 33 |
| J | 3 | 3 | 8 | 11 | 11 | 36 | 9 | 2 | - | 18 | 3 | 32 |
| M | 3 | 3 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 36 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 22 | 3 | 37 |
| S | 2 | 5 | 6 | 10 | 7 | 30 | 8 | 2 | - | 20 | 3 | 33 |
| C | 4 | 4 | 10 | 8 | 5 | 31 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 23 | 1 | 36 |

| Mrs. F | SELF | | | | | | HUSBAND | | | | | |
|------------|------|----|----|----|---|-------|---------|---|---|----|---|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| R | 5 | 8 | 1 | 18 | 7 | 39 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 11 | 1 | 21 |
| J | 6 | 6 | 4 | 18 | 5 | 39 | 4 | - | - | 11 | 6 | 21 |
| M | 9 | 3 | 9 | 13 | 5 | 39 | 3 | - | 6 | 9 | 3 | 21 |
| S | 2 | 10 | 3 | 22 | 2 | 39 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 12 | 1 | 21 |
| C | 5 | 2 | 17 | 14 | 1 | 39 | 2 | - | 5 | 14 | - | 21 |
| Agreed Set | 6 | 5 | 4 | 14 | 3 | 32 | 3 | - | 2 | 10 | 1 | 16 |
| R | 5 | 5 | 1 | 13 | 3 | 27 | 3 | - | 2 | 10 | 1 | 16 |
| J | 5 | 5 | 3 | 13 | 3 | 29 | 3 | - | - | 9 | 1 | 13 |
| M | 6 | 3 | 4 | 10 | 1 | 24 | 3 | - | 2 | 9 | 1 | 15 |
| S | 2 | 5 | 3 | 13 | 2 | 25 | 2 | - | 2 | 9 | 1 | 14 |
| C | 4 | 1 | 4 | 9 | 1 | 19 | 2 | - | - | 9 | - | 11 |

| Mrs. G | SELF | | | | | | HUSBAND | | | | | |
|------------|------|---|----|----|---|-------|---------|---|---|---|---|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| R | - | 4 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 16 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 5 | - | 14 |
| J | - | 2 | 2 | 10 | 2 | 16 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | - | 14 |
| M | - | 2 | 10 | 4 | - | 16 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 6 | - | 14 |
| S | - | 3 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 16 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 14 |
| C | - | 1 | 12 | 3 | - | 16 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 6 | - | 14 |
| Agreed Set | - | 2 | 7 | 4 | - | 13 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 5 | - | 14 |
| R | - | 2 | 2 | 3 | - | 7 | 2 | 5 | - | 4 | - | 11 |
| J | - | 2 | 2 | 4 | - | 8 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 5 | - | 13 |
| M | - | 2 | 7 | 4 | - | 13 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | - | 10 |
| S | - | 1 | 7 | 3 | - | 11 | 3 | 5 | - | 4 | - | 12 |
| C | - | - | 7 | 1 | - | 8 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 | - | 11 |

| Mrs. H | SELF | | | | | | HUSBAND | | | | | |
|------------|------|---|---|---|---|-------|---------|---|---|---|---|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| R | - | 4 | 3 | 8 | - | 15 | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | 3 |
| J | 4 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 15 | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | 3 |
| M | 2 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 15 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | - | 3 |
| S | 1 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 15 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | - | 3 |
| C | 5 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 15 | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | 3 |
| Agreed Set | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | - | 8 | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | 3 |
| R | - | 2 | 1 | 4 | - | 7 | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | 3 |
| J | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | - | 6 | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | 3 |
| M | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | - | 7 | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | 2 |
| S | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | - | 6 | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | 2 |
| C | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | 5 | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | 3 |

| Mrs. I | SELF | | | | | | HUSBAND | | | | | |
|------------|------|----|---|----|---|-------|---------|---|---|----|---|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| R | 10 | 10 | 2 | 10 | 4 | 36 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 12 | 3 | 26 |
| J | 12 | 5 | 1 | 9 | 9 | 36 | 5 | 7 | - | 10 | 4 | 26 |
| M | 11 | 3 | 3 | 17 | 2 | 36 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 9 | 2 | 26 |
| S | 9 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 2 | 36 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 26 |
| C | 4 | 8 | 8 | 15 | 1 | 36 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 11 | 1 | 26 |
| Agreed Set | 9 | 6 | 2 | 10 | 2 | 29 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 10 | 2 | 22 |
| R | 7 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 24 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 18 |
| J | 9 | 5 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 24 | 4 | 3 | - | 6 | 2 | 15 |
| M | 7 | 2 | 2 | 9 | 2 | 22 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 17 |
| S | 7 | 6 | 2 | 6 | - | 21 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 19 |
| C | 4 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 22 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 15 |

| Mrs. J | SELF | | | | | | HUSBAND | | | | | |
|------------|------|----|----|----|----|-------|---------|---|---|----|---|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| R | 3 | 11 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 33 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 12 | 1 | 22 |
| J | 2 | 6 | 3 | 10 | 12 | 33 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 22 |
| M | 2 | 2 | 14 | 14 | 1 | 33 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 10 | 1 | 22 |
| S | 2 | 4 | 13 | 12 | 2 | 33 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 11 | 2 | 22 |
| C | 3 | 3 | 14 | 12 | 1 | 33 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 7 | - | 22 |
| Agreed Set | 2 | 5 | 9 | 10 | 3 | 29 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 1 | 20 |
| R | 2 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 3 | 22 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 16 |
| J | 2 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 16 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 14 |
| M | 1 | 2 | 9 | 8 | 1 | 21 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 15 |
| S | 2 | 4 | 9 | 9 | 2 | 26 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 | - | 12 |
| C | 2 | 3 | 9 | 8 | 1 | 23 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 5 | - | 14 |

| Mr. K | SELF | | | | | | HUSBAND | | | | | |
|------------|------|---|----|---|---|-------|---------|---|----|----|---|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| R | 6 | 5 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 23 | 11 | 4 | 3 | 12 | 5 | 35 |
| J | 4 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 23 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 14 | 6 | 35 |
| M | 6 | - | 7 | 4 | 6 | 23 | 11 | - | 12 | 12 | - | 35 |
| S | 5 | - | 12 | 3 | 3 | 23 | 10 | 2 | 10 | 13 | - | 35 |
| C | 6 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 23 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 21 | - | 35 |
| Agreed Set | 5 | - | 4 | 3 | 5 | 17 | 10 | 2 | 4 | 13 | - | 29 |
| R | 5 | - | 1 | 3 | 4 | 13 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 9 | - | 21 |
| J | 4 | - | 1 | 3 | 5 | 13 | 8 | 2 | - | 10 | - | 20 |
| M | 5 | - | 4 | 3 | 3 | 15 | 8 | - | 4 | 10 | - | 22 |
| S | 5 | - | 4 | 2 | 2 | 13 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 11 | - | 26 |
| C | 4 | - | 4 | 3 | 1 | 12 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 13 | - | 25 |

| Mr. L | SELF | | | | | | HUSBAND | | | | | |
|------------|------|----|----|----|---|-------|---------|----|---|---|---|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| R | 1 | 13 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 30 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 21 |
| J | 2 | 7 | 3 | 14 | 4 | 30 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 21 |
| M | 4 | 3 | 11 | 11 | 1 | 30 | - | 3 | 7 | 9 | 2 | 21 |
| S | 6 | 8 | 13 | 3 | - | 30 | 2 | 10 | 7 | 2 | - | 21 |
| C | 5 | 2 | 11 | 11 | 1 | 30 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 8 | - | 21 |
| Agreed Set | 2 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 1 | 24 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 19 |
| R | 1 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 17 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 17 |
| J | 1 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 18 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 15 |
| M | 2 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 20 | - | 3 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 14 |
| S | 2 | 6 | 6 | 3 | - | 17 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 2 | - | 14 |
| C | 2 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 17 | - | 3 | 4 | 6 | - | 13 |

| Mr. M | SELF | | | | | | HUSBAND | | | | | |
|------------|------|---|----|----|----|-------|---------|---|---|---|---|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| R | 1 | 6 | 4 | 18 | 7 | 36 | - | 2 | - | 4 | 1 | 7 |
| J | 2 | 1 | 5 | 15 | 13 | 36 | - | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 7 |
| M | 7 | 1 | 15 | 10 | 3 | 36 | - | - | 2 | 3 | 2 | 7 |
| S | - | 2 | 18 | 13 | 3 | 36 | - | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 7 |
| C | 3 | 3 | 13 | 14 | 3 | 36 | - | 1 | 3 | 3 | - | 7 |
| Agreed Set | 2 | 1 | 10 | 13 | 3 | 29 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 |
| R | 1 | 1 | 2 | 10 | 2 | 16 | - | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| J | 2 | 1 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 20 | - | 1 | - | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| M | 2 | 1 | 10 | 8 | 3 | 24 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| S | - | 1 | 8 | 8 | 2 | 19 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 |
| C | 2 | 1 | 8 | 9 | 2 | 22 | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | 2 |

| Mr. N | SELF | | | | | | HUSBAND | | | | | |
|------------|------|----|----|----|---|-------|---------|---|---|---|---|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| R | 6 | 9 | 2 | 20 | 5 | 42 | - | 3 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 12 |
| J | 8 | 7 | 6 | 17 | 4 | 42 | 1 | 4 | - | 4 | 3 | 12 |
| M | 5 | 3 | 20 | 12 | 2 | 42 | 3 | - | 7 | 1 | 1 | 12 |
| S | 6 | 11 | 7 | 16 | 2 | 42 | - | 2 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 12 |
| C | 5 | 3 | 19 | 15 | - | 42 | - | - | 5 | 6 | 1 | 12 |
| Agreed Set | 5 | 5 | 7 | 14 | 1 | 32 | - | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 6 |
| R | 4 | 5 | 2 | 13 | 1 | 25 | - | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 6 |
| J | 4 | 5 | 6 | 12 | - | 27 | - | 2 | - | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| M | 5 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 22 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| S | 5 | 5 | 5 | 12 | 1 | 28 | - | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 6 |
| C | 4 | 2 | 6 | 9 | - | 21 | - | - | - | 2 | 1 | 3 |

| Mr&Mrs O | SELF | | | | | | PARTNER | | | | | |
|------------|------|---|----|----|---|-------|---------|---|---|---|---|-------|
| Mrs. O | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| R | 4 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 19 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 6 |
| J | 3 | - | 4 | 9 | 3 | 19 | 4 | - | - | 2 | - | 6 |
| M | 4 | - | 6 | 8 | 1 | 19 | 2 | - | - | 4 | - | 6 |
| S | 1 | - | 6 | 7 | 5 | 19 | 3 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| C | 3 | - | 5 | 7 | 4 | 19 | - | - | 1 | 4 | 1 | 6 |
| Agreed Set | 2 | - | 4 | 5 | 3 | 14 | 3 | - | - | 1 | - | 4 |
| R | 2 | - | 1 | 5 | 2 | 10 | 2 | - | - | 1 | - | 3 |
| J | 2 | - | 4 | 5 | 3 | 14 | 3 | - | - | 1 | - | 4 |
| M | 2 | - | 4 | 4 | - | 10 | 2 | - | - | 1 | - | 3 |
| S | 1 | - | 3 | 4 | 3 | 11 | 3 | - | - | 1 | - | 4 |
| C | 2 | - | 3 | 5 | 3 | 13 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| Mr. O | SELF | | | | | | PARTNER | | | | | |
| R | 2 | 5 | 1 | 13 | 4 | 25 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| J | 1 | - | 3 | 20 | 1 | 25 | | | | | | |
| M | 5 | - | 6 | 13 | 1 | 25 | | | | | | |
| S | 5 | 4 | 10 | 6 | - | 25 | | | | | | |
| C | 3 | - | 15 | 7 | - | 25 | | | | | | |

| Mr. O | SELF | | | | | | PARTNER |
|-------|------|---|---|----|---|----|---------|
| R | - | - | - | 8 | 1 | 9 | |
| J | - | - | 1 | 11 | 1 | 13 | |
| M | 3 | - | 2 | 8 | 1 | 14 | |
| S | 3 | - | 3 | 6 | - | 12 | |
| C | 3 | - | 3 | 3 | - | 9 | |

| Mr & Mrs P | SELF | | | | | | PARTNER | | | | | |
|------------|------|---|----|---|---|-------|---------|---|----|----|---|-------|
| Mrs. P | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| R | - | 1 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 12 | - | 3 | 8 | 7 | 4 | 22 |
| J | - | - | 5 | 2 | 5 | 12 | - | - | 5 | 12 | 5 | 22 |
| M | - | - | 7 | 3 | 2 | 12 | 1 | - | 12 | 6 | 3 | 22 |
| S | - | 2 | 8 | 2 | - | 12 | - | - | 20 | 2 | - | 22 |
| C | - | - | 11 | 1 | - | 12 | - | - | 12 | 10 | - | 22 |
| Agreed Set | - | - | 7 | 1 | 1 | 9 | - | - | 13 | 6 | 1 | 20 |
| R | - | - | 5 | 1 | 1 | 7 | - | - | 7 | 3 | 1 | 11 |
| J | - | - | 5 | 1 | 1 | 7 | - | - | 5 | 5 | 1 | 11 |
| M | - | - | 7 | 1 | 1 | 9 | - | - | 10 | 4 | 1 | 15 |
| S | - | - | 6 | 1 | - | 7 | - | - | 13 | 2 | - | 15 |
| C | - | - | 7 | 1 | - | 8 | - | - | 10 | 6 | - | 16 |
| Mr. P | SELF | | | | | | PARTNER | | | | | |
| R | 1 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 19 | - | - | 2 | 3 | - | 5 |
| J | 1 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 19 | - | - | 1 | 4 | - | 5 |
| M | 1 | - | 9 | 6 | 3 | 19 | - | - | 3 | 2 | - | 5 |
| S | 1 | - | 13 | 5 | - | 19 | - | - | 4 | 1 | - | 5 |
| C | 1 | 1 | 10 | 6 | 1 | 19 | - | - | 1 | 4 | - | 5 |
| Agreed Set | 1 | - | 7 | 3 | 2 | 13 | - | - | 2 | 3 | - | 5 |
| R | 1 | - | 4 | 2 | 2 | 9 | - | - | 2 | 3 | - | 5 |
| J | 1 | - | 3 | 2 | 1 | 7 | - | - | 1 | 3 | - | 4 |
| M | 1 | - | 6 | 3 | 2 | 12 | - | - | 2 | 2 | - | 4 |
| S | 1 | - | 7 | 2 | - | 10 | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | 3 |
| C | 1 | - | 5 | 3 | 1 | 10 | - | - | 1 | 3 | - | 4 |

| Mr&Mrs X | SELF | | | | | | PARTNER | | | | | |
|------------|------|---|----|---|---|-------|---------|---|---|---|---|-------|
| Mrs. X | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| R | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 8 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| J | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | - | 8 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| M | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | - | 8 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| S | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | - | 8 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| C | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | - | 8 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| Agreed Set | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | - | 8 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| R | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 4 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| J | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | - | 6 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| M | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | - | 6 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| S | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | - | 6 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| C | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | - | 7 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| Mr. X | SELF | | | | | | PARTNER | | | | | |
| R | 5 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 17 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 12 |
| J | 5 | 2 | - | 5 | 5 | 17 | 1 | 5 | - | 5 | 1 | 12 |
| M | 4 | 1 | 6 | 6 | - | 17 | 2 | - | 6 | 3 | 1 | 12 |
| S | 3 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 17 | - | 7 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 12 |
| C | 3 | - | 12 | 2 | - | 17 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 4 | - | 12 |
| Agreed Set | 5 | 1 | 1 | 3 | - | 10 | - | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 9 |
| R | 5 | 1 | - | 2 | - | 8 | - | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| J | 5 | - | - | 3 | - | 8 | - | 3 | - | 2 | 1 | 6 |
| M | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | - | 8 | - | - | 3 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| S | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | - | 8 | - | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 7 |
| C | 3 | - | 1 | 1 | - | 5 | - | 1 | 3 | 2 | - | 6 |

| Mrs. Y | SELF | | | | | | PARTNER | | | | | |
|------------|------|---|----|----|---|-------|---------|---|---|---|---|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| R | 3 | 5 | 2 | 20 | 4 | 34 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 14 |
| J | 2 | 6 | 2 | 17 | 2 | 34 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 14 |
| M | 6 | 2 | 13 | 12 | 1 | 34 | 2 | - | 7 | 4 | 1 | 14 |
| S | 3 | 4 | 6 | 19 | 2 | 34 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 14 |
| C | 3 | 2 | 20 | 9 | - | 34 | 1 | - | 5 | 8 | - | 14 |
| Agreed Set | 3 | 2 | 6 | 14 | - | 25 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3 | - | 9 |
| R | 3 | 2 | 2 | 12 | - | 19 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | - | 6 |
| J | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 | - | 16 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 4 |
| M | 3 | 2 | 6 | 11 | - | 22 | 1 | - | 4 | 2 | - | 7 |
| S | 3 | 2 | 5 | 14 | - | 24 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | - | 8 |
| C | 3 | 2 | 6 | 7 | - | 18 | 1 | - | 2 | 3 | - | 6 |